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Cent Chefs-d'Œuvre

ALBERT WOLFF

CENT CHEFS-D'ŒUVRE

The choice of the French private galleries

KNOEDLER & C°
170, FIFTH AVENUE
NEW-YORK

GEORGES PETIT
12, RUE GODOT-DE-MAUROY

LUDOVIC BASCHET
125, BOULEVARD SAINT-GERMAIN
PARIS

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ETCHINGS BEFORE LETTERS.

N° 98

PUBLISHERS' NOTICE

In offering this work to the small circle of collectors which can be accommodated by a strictly limited edition, the publishers trust that they need say little, and may confidently leave the volume itself to speak for them. A few words, however, to recall the circumstances which gave birth to the enterprise, will be appropriate. There is much legitimate curiosity among lovers of art about European private collections. The tourist in the public galleries is always tempted to wonder whether the examples seen there are the very best; whether there may not be a higher standard of excellence among those thrice-sifted treasures of art which are inaccessible to the

traveller, the hoards of private owners, chosen with all the ardour of individual caprice, with the advantage of boundless wealth, unmolested in their preservation and retaining a choicer lustre from their condition of privileged, selected, unpublished privacy. Nothing but the appeal of charity ever lets loose these jealously guarded hoards from the ancestral galleries and opulent saloons where they belong. When, accordingly, for the benefit of the Free Schools, the Exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces was opened in Paris on the 12th of June 1883, it became the collecting-point for the metropolitan and travelling world. Nor was it strange that this unique collection made up of the choice of many family galleries, this congress of crown jewels, insured like a diamond-shop, policed like a fort, should draw while it lasted the most distinguished crowd of judges and notables in Europe.

The benefit-Exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces was formed under the care of the Marquis de Vogué, the Duke d'Ayen, the Marquis de Massa, the Count de Baillon, the Marquis de Ganay, and the Count d'Harcourt. The solicitations of such patrons found a response equally in the circles of finance and the circles of aristocracy, and Bischoffsheim the banker was as ready with his Millet, the *Gleaners,* as the Duke de Morny with his Rembrandt, the *Gilder.* The *Gleaners,* in Millet's days of poverty, had been bought for 12,000 francs; now, the purchaser is ready who would pay 200,000 francs. Troyon's *Valley of the Toucque,* which had reposed twenty-four years in the collection of M. Goldschmidt, was originally purchased for 15,000 francs, and 250,000 francs are now offered for it. Of the seven panels by Meissonier, dated with the years when a Meissonier was still attainable, and which brought in to the artist about 130,000 francs out of the million francs they are easily worth now, there may be instanced the *Bowl-players,* sold in 1869 for 20,000 francs, and since bought by M. Defoer for 150,000; and the *Punchinello,* a delightful caprice measuring 6½ inches, which the artist formerly gave to a carriage-maker, in exchange for a victoria which took his fancy. His *Etcher,* also in the Exhibition, and his *At the Window,* are kept by the painter against all the temptations of the dealers (who have offered 300,000 francs), being written down in his will as a legacy to the Louvre. To the Louvre also has been left, by the late Maurice Cottier, the *Hamlet* of Delacroix; so that the gallery showed the correction by individuals of the penury of the State. Other canvases worth a journey to see and an ancestral purse to purchase, were present.

Several publishers saw the opportunity for a magnificently embellished work, and competed for the illustration of the gallery by various

forms of modern reproductive engraving. It appeared to the expert in charge of the collection, M. Petit, that etching, only, was fit to reproduce the brilliancy and spirit of the originals, and the hard task was assigned to the art-publisher, M. Baschet, of marshalling to the work the best living aquafortists. The difficulties were great, but were overcome in energetic and timely fashion, thanks in part to the enthusiasm of the etchers themselves at being entrusted with such a noble opportunity. Owing to this cordial cooperation, the publishers are able to present such masterpieces as the *Amateurs of Painting,* by Vion after Meissonier, and Rembrandt's *Gilder,* by Mordant. In offering to collectors this, their first publication of plates in book form, they congratulate themselves on having seized an opportunity of unprecedented interest.

I

At the little hamlet of Ville-d'Avray, near Paris, a spectator could behold, on the fine summer days of eight or nine years past, the most touching spectacle ever exhibited by an artist to his epoch. An old man, arrived at the apotheosis of a long lifetime, wrapped in a blouse, and sheltered under a linen parasol, whose sunny reflections framed the white hair in a sort of aureole, was there, face to face with the landscape; attentive, like a schoolboy; striving to entrap some heretofore unobserved secret of nature which might have escaped his seventy years' search; smiling at the twitter of the birds, and giving them back, from time to time, the chorus of some lively song;

in the spirit of one who exults in his twentieth year, who delights to live and whose soul expands under the poesy of the fields. Aged as was this great artist, he believed that he had still to learn; for more than half a century he had been contemplating creation, which reported some new revelation for every day; according to this patriarch there was no such thing as absolute mastery in his art, and he esteemed the life of a man, even a long life, inadequate for the study of landscape on all its sides and in its incalculable variety.

This patriarch, thus living in submission to nature, was Jean-Baptiste Corot, one of the greatest of French painters. His renown, now fixed for eternity, had erected itself slowly upon a labour of fifty years, of which the first half had simply been a long strife between the ancient successful routine, unrecognisant of such a master, and the obstinacy of the artist himself in walking straight ahead, athwart the disdain of some, the ignorance of others. In this fine soul, no bitterness had been left by the long combat of genius with sleek mediocrity; Corot, at the culmination of his career, would talk without any irony of those who for so long a period had denied him; in the conversations I have had with him, this mighty artist never allowed the smallest trace of resentment to transpire, whether against the exhibition-juries who had rejected his early works, or against the blind spectator who had passed with indifference before the revelations contained in his canvas; he would tell me of these episodes in his career, not in the tone of a man willing to boast of the obstacles he had cleared and the recalcitrants he had imposed on, but like an intelligence replete in its achievement, innocently and simply, without bitterness as without braggadocio.

When he would be talking with us in this vein, giving us the recital of injustices received, to the accompaniment of that easy smile which was like a radiation of goodness over his fine patriarch's head, we venerated him for his art at the same time that we loved him for the rare quality of his heart of gold. Over one and the other the passage of the years had not been able to steal away, from the artist a single one of his enthusiasms, from the man a particle of his childlike goodness. This old man was not like other men of his years, of whom the best are unable to repress a kind of chagrin in comparing the long travelled road behind them with the short one which remains to be measured. He had but to install himself in the face of nature, to recapture the artistic ardour and the hopes of one's twentieth year. When young he had strolled singing over the plains; and old age found him just as free from care as he had been half a century before. We could but stand

spellbound before this spectacle of beautiful age, when we would thus discover him bent like a schoolboy over his themes to the last, now erasing with a movement of anger the study which would not come up to the example of nature contemplated by the artistic eye, now drawing back with sudden satisfaction to better calculate the effect of the effort; when we would hear him from far off, approving himself aloud and awarding himself a prize with the words "Famous, that bit!" or criticising himself roundly with the sentence, "We will begin it all over again, my boy!" And then we must needs look with softened eyes upon Corot the man, even as we bowed with emotion before his results.

It must be noted, again, to account for this greenness of vitality in a man of his age, that Corot had passed through life as one of the chosen ones of destiny, which had conferred on this genius the boon of health and spared the miseries of a struggle for daily bread. The son of a merchant, he had been sheltered from his cradle against need. His youth was untroubled, save by the long opposition extended by his father, before permitting him

to enter the artistic career. But this resistance once withdrawn, the boy Corot, supported by a pension from the father, was able to walk through life laughing, and to arrive at the term of his glorious career without having been delayed for an hour by the need of practical support.

It was only after a hundred doubts that the merchant Corot decided to abandon his son to his true vocation. When the young Jean-Baptiste was through with his hasty schooling, he was condemned by the paternal will to serve an apprenticeship with a mercer; twas a faulty prentice, who sketched landscapes over the bills ; the employer scolded him roundly and said to the father at the end of the second year :

" Yonder lad will never come to anything in the shop. I am going to send him about Paris as my commercial traveller. "

And the future celebrity began to pad through the Paris streets, with a card of samples under his arm, visiting the small shopkeepers and the petty tailors to recommend the goods of his employer. Corot has narrated to me with his own lips the incident which caused him to abandon trade for all time. After having trotted about the city for a whole week, he went back one evening to the shop, all radiant with his first success as a salesman; he had succeeded in selling a tailor an entire piece of olive cloth, the fashionable shade of the day, and he came back with the announcement to his proprietor. The merchant, far from congratulating him, assumed his severest tone and said to Corot :

" I have no need of your aid to sell my olive cloth, which every body is quarreling to get hold of in my magazine. A smart bagman would force upon the shops my spoiled remnants and my old-fashioned styles, do you perceive? "

The lad Corot perceived so lucidly, that he was disgusted for good with the trickeries of the smaller Parisian commerce. This time, it was past returning. He was not made to praise before a customer that which his conscience found inferior. He was losing his best years, he declared, in commerce, a thing which could never greatly interest him. He wished to be a painter, nothing else. After some protracted storms, the father of Corot agreed conditionally. His attempts should he submitted to Victor Bertin, a master in great vogue under the Restoration and now for a long time most effectually forgotten. The best work which Bertin achieved in his whole career was the discovery of the young Corot's aptitude and the conquest of the paternal opposition. Victor Bertin promised that he would make something out of the youth.

That which Bertin called " making something out of the youth "

was, to shape him into his own likeness, to make of him a second-rate painter of what was called historical landscape, because a scene out of history was set to playing in a parcel of scenery borrowed from the conventions. From the pretentious arrangers of landscape in that day, the seductions, the confidences, the poems of nature quite escaped. They rated the creation as something beneath their genius. They openly avowed the presumptuous attempt to correct it, as they said. You could not practise grand

art unless you could get away from the actual, unless you could breed in your head a vegetation in contradiction to nature and wanting in life. This conventional art was called grand art, in opposition to the quest of reality, which was little art. Thus, the ingenious Victor Bertin produced grand art during a lifetime, without leaving other vestiges of his endless industry than certain commonplace canvases, bought in their time by Government and sprinkled through the royal residences, where we can still see, as for instance at Compiègne, the low-water mark of French painting at a certain instant.

And out of this fatal school there was destined to emerge one of the greatest landscape artists who have ever existed; he disengaged himself by saturating his being with nature when he had a free moment to give to this fountain of all art, and in elbowing aside, one by one, every mistaken lesson in his independent fashion of meeting the works of creation. This Bertin-disciple was simply one of the predestinated, under whose impulse the whole of the ancient routine stock of goods was to be criticised away into non-existence. The battle was long and furious. On returning from his first Italian tour, from whence he brought the admirable studies which are like the first lispings of his genius, Corot found Artistic France in revolution. A constellation of young spirits had arisen, men who, in their impetuous effort to turn back landscape-painting face to face with that nature it so long had slighted, raised up French art, and secured for it the preeminence in the artistic history of our century.

On coming into France again, Corot felt his soul expand before the aspect of his native soil. In the little walk round about Paris, he could pick up again the penetrating, vivid hints of his earliest years: he could breathe freer in the midst of this scenery where he was born, and which came closer to his mind and to his whole being than any Italy; the spot where he had made the discovery of a true vocation. The allowance from his father permitted him to follow his inspirations and to chase with a free foot the scent of his instinct. Those around him had to fight for the mouthful of each successive day, and the heart-tumult which stirred within them was apt to express itself by wild canvases where everything was confused as with a passing storm, the phantom of the tortured lives of these pioneers. For Corot, existence was a developing road, cleared of every care but care of art. His thought remained serene and joyous; the whole creation smiled to him. Everything seemed impartially grand and fine in that nature which unfolded to him its most gracious and most poetic side; no need to seek afar, he thought, that which is always nearest us, the greatness and simplicity which dwell in truth. The controlling principle in this great artist is never to strike the Philistine by panoramic magnitude, but to establish in his art the vibration which is in nature, to take by surprise its perpetual life, to send the air circulating through space, to shake the foliage in the breeze. He wishes to disengage and carry to his canvas the poet's impression of the object. This poetry, he rightly deems, is not only in the composition; the composition is to him of small account; it is in the truth, for nothing is of such finished poetry as truth itself. Whether it be the old *Bridge of Mantes*, glimpsed through the tall trees which reflect themselves in the sunny waters,

or *Garda Lake* stretching out of sight into the light of dawn, with the leafage of the trees upon its brink trembling in the wind; it is always the country feeling which this enchanter seems to apply to his canvas, whatever the aspect; he makes the cloth swim with the rosy fumes of morning, or he sprinkles his embroidery with the humidity of coming night; the reeds waved by the breeze seem to stir on the face of the limpid pools, and the boughs of the trees follow with new-born impulse the vagaries of the air-current. Corot is the excelling interpreter of serenity in nature.

We need not be surprised that a style springing, as it may be said,

all fresh from the nerves of a primitive artist, who sought the support of no predecessor, was so long a subject of debate. The public had been so habituated to see filing before its eyes a succession of rigid lands-capes that it was naturally troubled before the vibrating themes of Corot. Those who recommence eternally the official teaching of the schools rejected him desperately. And, he the quiet inspired man, heard little of the clamour in the solitude of his woods, on the banks of the pool where he opened his soul to the enchantment of creation.

Wrestling with nature as it were breast to breast, applying himself not so much to the form and line as to the life which moves nature, there dis-engaged himself gradually a grand artist and a grand poet; one in whose art everything charms, allures, enchants, as in the scene itself. There is

no trick of making the foreground send off the distances of the picture; an atmosphere, that envelopes all as in nature, gives all its harmony of colour and establishes all in perspective. There is no need to cut an unrecognisable landscape with the track of a Holy Family; he shows humanity in its circulating medium, which is the atmosphere. The fisherman on the banks of his pond or the countryman plodding through an avenue of trees is sufficient to show the close union between the country and him who lives by the country. These figures are never thrown into their places by hazard; they move about the scene to make its impression perfect. But this poet has hours when his thoughts take their flight towards mysterious regions, and then, in some site incomparably grand in its very realism, he makes the murmur of the foliage speak by the surnatural apparition of nymphs and fauns, even as the bard believes he hears the voices of spirits in the whisper of winds passing through the trees. But these figures, whether those of nymphs or of simple fishers, are always a complementary part of the scene, the incarnation of an emotion the artist has felt; so true it is that in art the subject is naught, and that its whole value is in the impression it can communicate.

According to the homefelt sensations of the artist, the art changes. Sometimes, when nature strikes him by its precision of form and its distinctness of line, he follows it as closely as any of the grand masters. Sometimes, when his thought is arrested by the general effect, he slights the detailed part and only renders that which occupies himself at the time. This is why in the series of the master's works, alongside of pictures where the interpretation is so finished, and where rests the stamp of one sole side of this varied talent, there are themes wherein the painter only follows the poetic impression which affects him, and where everything is sacrificed to that general cast of the subject. But the mastery is always the same, whatever the visible form it produces. It needs to be equally experienced to stop on the wing the leafage flying in the breeze, and fix it in its proper key of expression and in its confused mass, or to design with firm hand and with faultless lines the trunk of an oak buttressed to the ground by its stout roots. Corot's art, it has been said, is a window opened upon nature, and it is true. He does not return to us only with a recollection more or less felicitous of out-of-doors, but the very out-of-doors is brought in with its vibrations and its air. Others have looked at creation with severer eyesight than Corot; but no master has contemplated nature with more poetry, more thorough emotion.

In what he has left, all is not of equal value. To insist upon its

illustrious distinction, we are fain to put aside the hasty production of his last years, when after long neglect, and in the rising vogue of painting generally, the army of hungry merchants and of tardy collectors fell upon this man of genius, not always strong enough to resist their solicitations. Aged now, he was flattered by this late-coming enthusiasm. It did not displease him to have a mounting tide of banknotes in his modest studio of the street of the Petites-Ecuries. This was his compensation for the time when he would say laughingly to one of his friends :

" At last I have sold a picture and I am sorry for it : the collection is no longer complete ! "

It was no love of gold, however, which threw Corot into this feverish production of the latter period ; the great man lived on a little and gave away the surplus. Although his inherited fortune, of which the yearly income was some forty thousand francs, was destined by his childless condition to pass into the hands of collateral relatives, Corot, when his father's death placed him in possession of his estate, was determined never to touch it. What comes from the family ought to go to the family, he would say. And he let the interest accumulate on the head of the principal, for the sake of his nephews. " This money is not mine ", said Corot. " I am only

the holder till my death ". And he kept his word. But he needed money, and a great deal of money, for the works of charity which were become the grand passion of his beneficent old age. All that he gained now by his painting he gave away without counting, in large sums. It is known that he purchased, one day, the little house in which Daumier, the great neglected artist, had lived for years at Valmondois, and which he was under obligation to quit, because he could not buy it. Corot did not spend much time in reflection; he went to Valmondois, paid for the little property in ready money, and offered it to his friend : the latter simply observed :

" You are the only man whom I esteem highly enough to accept a thing from him without a blush. "

Another time, one of his painter friends came to ask him for five thousand francs. Corot, that day in a bad humour, replied that he had not the money. But as soon as the friend had gone, he began to reflect. He took off his blouse, laid down his pipe — that renowned " pipette " which has become one of the legends of the studios — ran to the house of his friend, and cried :

" I beg your pardon, I am a perfect knave. I told you just now that I had not five thousand francs. I was a liar, and the proof is, that here they are ! "

Shortly before his death, he made a great sale to a merchant. As the latter was counting out the proceeds to Corot, the artist took a bundle of ten notes of a thousand francs each, and said to the dealer :

" Keep this; and when I am gone, you will give during ten years a pension of a thousand francs to the widow of my friend Millet. "

And it is in this way that the wife of another immortally grand artist, dead for his part in a condition of misery, receives for the past eight years this pension, offered by a fortunate genius to a genius unfortunate. Although Corot gave by handsful in this way, not only to his friends, but also to casual solicitors, and though he had never touched his patrimony, as I observed, there was found in his desk more than a hundred thousand francs which the careless great-heart had never taken the trouble to invest. It was simply his permanent charity fund. For himself, humble as he always was, he had no need for much money. A little suite of rooms in the faubourg Poissonnière, the modest studio on the fourth floor, sufficed him. His grand passion outside of his art was music; on Sundays he was seen at the popular concerts, thoughtful and tendered, touched sometimes to tears when they played an adagio of

Mozart's—his favorite master, the brother-soul of this grand artist who was himself the Mozart of painting. Corot, overwhelmed with orders in his later days, adopted the system followed by famous physicians for the payment of his works; it was less for one than for another; he would give away for a trifling price to a needy picture-dealer; he made the middle class pay higher; and he "salted" well, to use his own word, the wealthy men who had slighted him so long, and who now precipitated themselves on

him in his apotheosis. But all this money melted away in secret charities; he squandered himself for others.

The illustrious patriarch felt plainly that this incessant production was drawing him away from grand art; and it was for that reason that, escaping from Paris, he repaired so often to his tiny house at Ville-d'Avray to saturate himself once more in nature. There at any rate it was against the rule to disturb him at his study. This retreat was respected as a sacred temple where Corot, as he used to say sometimes, was reciting his prayer before the works of God.

Offended by long injustice, the artists, independently of the official parties of the exhibitions, held a meeting shortly before the great man's death, and with filial affection offered a grand gold medal to him who was

tenderly named Father Corot. Never did the master appear more delighted than on that evening, when, smiling in his boundless kindness, he thanked those whom he called "his children."

When Corot died, his friend and his equal, Jules Dupré, could utter these simple words which form the best of funeral orations, for they comprise the whole existence of Corot.

"It will be hard to fill the place of the painter, it will be impossible to fill the place of the man."

An artist's character is always reflected in his works. That which transpires through the keynote of inimitable skill, is the tenderness of the man to whatever touches his soul. We live with the painter in his scenery; we breathe his poetry, gentle and simple as the song of the people; we rejoice in the enchantment he feels, and which fills his whole work with the happy temperament of the painter, happy to be alive and to smell the field-scents that seem to envelop the landscape and possess all who contemplate his canvas. Only the art which evokes such sensations is great art; the rest is but cleverness and legerdemain. When a man does not himself think, when he does not put his whole soul in the panel he paints, when we cannot read through his work the bottom of his soul, he may produce paintings, but art, never!

II

An evening of autumn, in an indigent peasant's cabin; the poorly-clothed children, shivering with cold, return from school: others, mere infants, cast an apprehensive look into the eating-room and ask why the table is not set; the mother regards them affectionately, her eyes seem to interrogate the husband on his entrance; and he falls despairingly into the rude wooden armchair and rests his head upon his hands. To-day there is nothing to eat in the humble home at Barbizon, in the pretty village of the Fontainebleau forest. The children, saddened by the silence of their parents, cling around them; they feel that some great trouble hovers over the house. The night co-

mes on little by little, and this lamentable family picture is plunged in darkness; from time to time the damp wood flames up an instant and reveals the discouraging group with a hasty glare, quickly extinguished. The inhabitants of this home are in need of everything; the baker has stopped his credit; if the family friend who went yesterday to Paris does not return before an hour is out, the poor people must go to bed without having eaten. They count the minutes. Nothing comes.

Suddenly the father rises; he has heard the stumping of a wooden leg on the hard ground. It is he! The door opens. "Give us some light!" cries a strong voice. From this peremptory tone they perceive that the friend brings good news. Just now this distressed family were afraid to look at each other; now hope springs up again; the tallow candle in the old candlestick of tin is ignited; in the doorway is seen the outline of a man of tall stature, who, with an echoing peal of laughter, shows an enormous loaf which he throws on the table, crying. "Come, children, come to supper!" This saviour is Diaz. At Paris, he has sold, for sixty francs, three drawings of his friend Millet, and, after the fashion of the day when gold was not so common, he has been paid in big silver five-franc pieces; he has changed one of them in passing the baker's, to attend first to the needful; he draws

out the other eleven pieces, one after one, from the pocket of his velveteen trousers; makes them shine in the light of the tallow candle, and form a fine silver wreath all around the loaf. The delighted children, wondering at the treasure, have come up to the table, and open their eyes wide with astonishment and delight. The mother thanks Diaz with a glance; she finds no word fit to express her gratitude. The father has seized his friend's hand, and presses it feelingly, and now everybody is set to work; the fire is stirred; now the boiling water hisses in the pot, and some potatoes, some pork-fat, some cabbages, are found to throw into it along with the crusts. The fumes of this feast mount through the house and fly to the heads of the poor hungry ones; and soon the family is united around the white deal table. Millet alone is thoughtful, for he has to think of the morrow. But Diaz encourages him; his eyes shine brightly, he gives enormous thumps on the floor with his wooden leg, and cries:

"Patience! They will come to it gradually! Rousseau has sold a landscape for five hundred francs; for my part, I have sold a view of Fontainebleau for seventy-five francs. And I am commissioned to ask you for companion-sketches to your drawings. And this time, instead of twenty francs, they are to pay you twenty five!"

To which Millet replies resignedly:

"If I could only sell two drawings a week at that price all would go right!"

And Diaz, blowing the smoke thick from his pipe and making rings to amuse the children, says:

"Are you not ashamed? Fifty francs a week! Go on, you financier!"

The man whom Diaz facetiously called financier, to recall him from his visions of gold and bind him to the reality of things below, was Jean-François Millet, that is to say one of the greatest artists of this century. Born at Gréville, in 1815, he came to Paris and got himself entered in the studio of Paul Delaroche. In the midst of the young men who pursued their studies with the painter, Millet made himself conspicuous by an austerity which was in singular contrast with his years. It was because he was always contrasting the style he was being taught with the style he glimpsed in his own brain. No doubt it was well to learn anatomy and study the structure of man; but when this was done, it was not the thing to pass one's life in painting after models in theatrical dresses and in affected postures; rather seize man in his life, in his ordinary surroundings, in his toil. Those peasants of light opera especially, shown in paintings, those peasants in Sunday rig, with clothes fresh from the costumer, irritated him. Millet had

always liked the country; he betook himself to the village of Barbizon, which he was doomed never to quit; he wished to live among the peasants. Far from Paris, in this unknown village, living was cheap; and the less he had to think of the money question, the more time he could devote to the study of art. In this insulation of his mind, in this perpetual contemplation of the peasant in his own medium, the genius of Millet ripened, notwithstanding the cares and privation of every day. This art proceeds, we may

say, from the very entrails of Millet; he bears upon no predecessor; it has nature for its fountain, and for nursing father the proper mind of the painter.

His family increased around Millet; numerous children surrounded the grand artist, and their needs became more pressing. However humble was the course of living to which Millet and his flock resigned themselves, it was impossible always to face the modest expense. The public, accustomed to the pretty peasant-scenes in vogue, asked where these earth-covered labourers came from, and these rough-countrymen with their trouble-crushed expressions and callous hands. Such demonstrations of country poverty made a sorry effect in the houses of the rich who hung their walls with painting for a diversion; the style of Millet rebuked their well-being,

and it was rejected. Whence came this melancholy art, lacking in superficial attraction! It was not at all cheerful, not at all pleasant. Only a few refined spirits comprehended him; but most generally it was some modest collector, or a keen speculator who bethought himself that at the present price of Millet's works one risked no great matter. It was in this way that a little masterpiece, the first thought of the *Gleaners*, which is now worth sixty thousand francs, was sold by Millet for twelve pieces of one hundred sous. It was an enormous sum for this innocent man, for it represented bread for twelve days, in other words nearly two weeks of independence for this genius, contented in his patriarchal existence. Provided that after the day's labour he had at evening the soup of the peasant with a bit of hard bread and the cool water from the spring, the rest was of little consequence. At night, when the children were put to bed, the great artist would read the bible by the light of a lamp, not so much from devotion as to fortify and guarantee himself by the example of the simply-living patriarchs; often his friend and neighbour, Théodore Rousseau, come to sit facing him; then these two neglected ones would take their mutual revenge for the disdain of the age, and draw the strength for tomorrow's struggle out of a common enthusiasm for art. Thirty years of self-denial, resignation and daily discouragement were needed before the painter could at length make his mark; and as it was fated that he should be the martyr of art to the very end, sickness seized upon him in the hour when he at length attained his aim, plunging him in the grave just when renown attached itself finally to his talent.

There is no more touching story than that of this great artist who passed his life in poverty and loneliness. The canvases which now form the glory of French art passed unnoticed at the official Salons, disdained by the juries, the juries exclusively picked out of the Institute, which was omnipotent at that period, and which, though since somewhat transformed, was then in the systematic habit of rejecting the fine and living works which lift so high the art of France. Millet's paintings, at first rejected, were afterwards admitted at the Salons, but with no success: the artist was reproached for creating ugliness, that is to say for not painting the conventional peasantry, harmoniously shaped and garnished with all the graces. Millet saw the peasant as a being with round shoulders and hollow chest, from the habit of stooping over the ground; with face and arms baked in the sun and tanned by the wind. In those deathless masterpieces of his, the peasant appears in the majestic verity of the human creature wrestling with the earth, which he impregnates and makes to live. But there came no

awards from the Salon, no pay, no sort of encouragement, with the exception of the bravos of certain youthful artists and the applause of some rare art-critics who gradually rallied to the side of this original genius. Through every kind of neglect, Millet pursued his road, with head high and ironical lip; he had on his side the approbation of those whom he esteemed the most, Delacroix, Rousseau, Dupré, Corot, Diaz and of that other great artist so long overlooked, Barye. The common struggle had established something like a brotherhood of arms among all these pioneers. The little group marched hand in hand against superior numbers, the whole sleek mediocrity of art, as a handful of heroes marches to fight a numerous army, with the determination to conquer or die. Of all those fine artists, Millet alone was not to know success. His destiny was cruel to the end; he fell mortally wounded in the combat at the hour of the others' triumph; when finally, after such tedious struggles and such sickening toil, his art began to be talked of, the painter, struck down by sickness, had lost his strength and energy; we may say of Millet that he died of his genius, conquered before his time, fallen to earth at the moment when age was only

just foreseen, an age that would have been gentle and happy; and that he left to posterity, which restores the balance of all things, the care of keeping his name, as that of one of the greatest in French art.

In the exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces, the genius of Millet burst forth still more powerfully than in the past. Three of his canvases, especially, represented the whole career of the artist; three absolute masterpieces, *the Gleaners, the Sheepfold, the Man Hoeing;* all three give birth to the same surprise. It is that the figures, in their small dimensions, assume under the eye that contemplates them the scale of nature. This mirage is explained by the grandeur of this art springing from nature itself and drawing you to nature with all her force. The eye sees the thing in the dimensions which it actually has; and it is thus that it stamps itself on the memory. A great artist is able to reduce proportions without belittling the majesty of things.

That is what happens with the *Angelus*, for instance. When we regard this grand masterpiece, which shows in all simplicity the man and the woman who clasp their hands in prayer as they hear the sound of the chimes through the loneliness of the fields, these two peasants seem to grow under the eyes of the spectator; they take the proportions of nature; the landscape spreads and becomes illimitable; the glowing sky has a mysterious breadth; as long as we abide in the charm we feel this illusion.

It is the same with *the Man Hoeing,* one of the master-works of Millet. The peasant is there, leaning on his hoe, panting in an instant's surcease of toil that crushes. He leans forward like a being whose will revolts against the triumph of the besieging weariness. The action is so keenly taken, the forms are drawn in such living lines, the drama of humility wrestling with the earth is so powerfully indicated, that the peasant assumes the natural proportions under the spectator's eye. We suffer with his toil; we are like himself, overcome with the superfluity of travail laid upon mankind; he lives, and we live with him; the field he tills spreads away out of eyesight; we no longer think of a picture, so entirely does the truth of art carry us to nature itself. It is just so that we have all of us seen the labourer bent over the soil, and before the reality we have felt the same respect and the same pity, going out from us towards the simple resigned being whose chest bursts with the sob of a blacksmith's bellows which we can hear in the solitude like an unconscious outcry of humility against destiny. The painter who knows how to invest so much thinking in one sole figure, who succeeds in stirring the soul with this simple rustic situation, is a grand master, believe me. In none of his works has Millet

been more simply powerful. I only know of one design where he has put such a poignant drama into a single figure, I mean the *Vine-dresser*. He is seated on a hillock, worn out, bruised by fatigue, breathing hard, with the dreadful look of a being so stupefied by savage labour that he no longer thinks of anything; his head sinks, his arms fall, overcome, down his sides, the hands hang inert; there is no will left in this figure, stupid after expending the last of his physical forces. None better than Millet could comprehend and render this struggle of man against his work; he, the

great victim, whose entire life was the fight of each day for the daily bread; how many a time himself, panting, worn out, broken and discouraged, he had sat down by the wayside!

All these fine productions only rallied to the side of the painter the more enthusiastic among the young. The official juries of the Salon passed unheeding before this new force, and kept their kindness for the affectations of comic-opera peasant-girls. They were still under the controlling spell of the Italian peasant of Léopold Robert; his elegant harvesters, with their select postures, grouping themselves in tableaux vivants, and composed with plenty of good taste; dressed, too, in polychrome costume on which the delving of the earth had left never a trace. It was in the full bloom of that commanding style that Millet came forward with his veritable peasantry, in their energetic attitudes, and with their clothes that little by

little had taken the earth-colour, so completely had man assimilated himself with the soil. This lacks poetry, people said; in other words, this lacked falsehood. There was no arrangement for dazzling the eye; in this style everything addressed itself to the thought. It was not on the surface of the canvas that the poetry lay; it was in the essence of those creations. Millet was a grand primitive bard issuing from solitude and contemplation like the old poets sprung from the heart of the people, of whom the names have disappeared, but whose works have remained as imperishable manifestations of the human soul.

This poetic originality varied with the subject. If it terrified in the *Man Hoeing,* it took a gentle aspect in the *Gleaners.* The harvest is gathered; the farmer reckons the stacks which his labourers form under the limpid and cheerful sunshine. Earth has been generous to such a point that even the unhappy can claim their share. Poor women are gleaning the scattered stalks. They gather the alms of the fields, with movements full of truth and grace; the light is kind to all, to the farmer as to the humble, to each in the proportion that destiny has allotted him; all are happy in the measure of their ambitions. The artist, too, maintains his work in a contented keynote; here the poetry of Millet relents; the sun is not only spread over the landscape, but its rays penetrate into the soul, and warm for an instant the heart chilled with poverty.

The *Sheepfold* is another masterpiece. The mist wraps the whole scene; the shepherd is enveloped in his cloak, and drives into the enclosure his flock of sheep, who huddle together under the keenness of the night; the moon lights up the scene with its pale and undecided radiance; further than eye can see, a silence hangs over the fields. This canvas is only some twenty inches wide, and it produces the effect of a work of vastest proportions; poetry penetrates, solitude invades, the fancy so completely that we think no more of the size of the picture. It becomes immense, like nature.

Little by little, from the habit of identifying himself with the men of the fields, Millet had himself become a peasant. Tall in stature, with powerful shoulders, with a face sunbrowned but full of character, dressed in poor clothes and with wooden shoes on his feet, he might have been taken for a ploughman. In the peasants of his works we find again the artist himself; he claimed to have got into his painting that which he called the cry of the earth, and the "ugh!" of the digger whose chest was crushed between his strokes. We might say too that Millet got into his painting the cry of art, and the sob of the grand painter condemned to live in privation.

Notwithstanding, before his death Millet could see advancing towards

him the step of justice, the never-dying, the eternal laggard. When for the first time, at the Exposition of 1867, the public saw a number of his works brought together in one spot, they were struck by the variety of that art which till then had been called monotonous. A first-class medal was deigned to be thrown to this grand genius, who, since the Salon of 1853, had not carried off any prize; there was even added, to do honour to the order rather than the recipient, the ribbon of the Legion of honour, which,

after thirty years of noblest toil, was to be the consolation of this illustrious man, a martyr to every kind of affliction. When Millet died, at sixty years, in that village of Barbizon where all his humble and resigned existence was passed, the Government manifested some shame at having left the illustrious artist so long in abandonment. It offered his widow a small pension. It is not seemly to insist too much on the poor question of money when we count up the labours of a man who set disdainfully aside the considerations of success, to be able to live only in his art.

One day, while talking with me of the period of poverty which the artists of his generation had passed through, Rousseau said :

"We were always without a sou, but we never spoke of money, for money counted for nothing in our ambition."

When we speak of Millet, it is more seemly, again, to touch lightly on the question of prices, which prove nothing. The *Man Hoeing*, which represents a fortune, is no greater a work today than at the period when the great artist sold it for two thousand francs. The years of wretchedness which Millet passed through will be redeemed by the centuries of imperishable glory which await his name in the future. The humble thatched cottage of Barbizon where the life of Millet flowed along pertains to history more than the rich mansion of a fortunate man in easy circumstances, where the stone stands generally unhallowed and unspeaking, without a recollection of the being whose life has slipped through it.

III

DURING the first quarter of the century, there was at Parmain, on the banks of the Oise, a small porcelain-factory, conducted by a manufacturer of ability, M. Dupré; the principal porcelain-painter of the atelier was a child of twelve years. He had been taught to read and write, after which he was harnessed to the paternal trade. Sixty years have since rolled by; the child is now a robust old man; during all his long life, Jules Dupré has no sooner quitted the banks of the Oise than he has tried to get back there again, with greater and greater attraction. In the vicinity of Parmain, where of old the little boy bent over his dishes, the great artist is now always found working, in the consummation of his career. The illustrious landscape-painter is only separated from the village which was his artistic cradle by the current of the Oise. The prospect from his windows is a mass of souvenirs; every hour, the enthusiasms of adolescence return to the soul of the master-painter, and pay in their account of the courageous and honest impulses derived from his earliest years. The house at l'Isle-Adam is but a modest, or at best a comfortable one, with middle-class conveniences, but no tinsel; the great ornament of the property is the name of the owner. Everything

is arranged in this refuge of a great artist to facilitate home-life, work, and rest. No noise of the street disturbs the painter at his incessant labour. The family, tender and attentive to his slightest wish, waits to gather round him at his hours of rest; often a friend comes to sit at his hospitable board, and then, when Jules Dupré has lighted his pipe, there is familiar conversation, or rather the master talks and the rest listen, for the whole interest centres in his recollections. It is the glorious names of the men of 1830, as they are called, which form the capital of the talk. The lively intelligence of the old artist seems to grow boyish again in the sparkle of these confidences, and then we see the whole procession — Delacroix, Rousseau, Diaz, Corot, Barye, Millet, Decamps and Troyon; that is as much as to say, the quintessence of the artistic glory of our century. Now, during the recital of the hard commencement, Dupré's singularly intense blue eye fires up with the light of battle; now, the voice softens, and his thoughts seem to float off in a gentle melancholy towards the impenetrable mystery whither his friends have preceded this last survivor of the proud pleiad of 1830. On the walls hang a few souvenirs of these noble friends, especially, among others, the magnificent drawings of Théodore Rousseau, and a superb canvas by Corot, bought by Dupré out of his savings, and from which he has never been willing to part though in

receipt of offers of fifty thousand francs. But not only is Jules Dupré the last survivor of the illustrious group, he was its precursor. He indicated first in modern art the return to the eternal source of nature. His admiration for these lost comrades is so sincere that he will not allow himself to be called their chief; before posterity they form his equals, but in the past it was he who showed the way.

How has this humble porcelain-painter arrived at the position of an important master, without having ever been the pupil of any one? How was the ambition born, in that young infantine brain of twelve years, to bear back landscape art to the magnificences of a Claude Lorrain, of a Ruysdaël, of a Hobbema, before hearing these names pronounced, and without acquaintance with a single one of their works? It was in the contemplation of nature, in his isolation amidst her influences, that the mind of the lad was opened to her beauty, and that her mystery was sounded by his thought. In his hours of freedom the boy used to wander over the fields with sketch-book and pencil; no professor interposed himself between this talent in its birth and what it portrayed, to dictate any narrow formula; what he was ignorant of, he asked but of her; what he learned was from her teaching. At eighteen, the little china-painter had become a young master; the crayon studies which the great artist today preserves from his early years are so many surprises, for they bear witness to a comprehension of nature unique for so young a man. In his odd hours, to add to his resources, he turned out for a friend of the family a series of clock-faces, automata in which, by means of springs connected with the movement, a sailboat would shoot the arch of a bridge, or a hermit rang his bell from hour to hour. From these low beginnings emerged our grand artist, solely by the influence of nature.

The art of landscape-painting was at that time lost in France. It was despised as a thing of subaltern rank, and this prejudice, notwithstanding the glory which the French school derives from its illustrious landscape-painters of the present century, continues still in the circles of official teaching, to such a point that none of the glorious French landscape artists has been awarded the Salon medal of honour. True, they have given it themselves, with their own hands, in the sight of posterity, by their proud, fine, lasting performance. What added still more to the contempt felt for landscape under the Restoration, was that it had fallen into the hands of the pigmies. When these subalterns were not occupied in servilely carrying on the style of Poussin, whom they quietly imitated as if that painter had not himself borne his own style to its conclusion, they

pieced out pictures from fragments of their own sketches, as a Harlequin costume is made with rags of every colour. In summer, they went off for a booty of sketches, and in winter they stitched these studies together, and made of them compositions stuffed with broken stumps of trees, burst arches of bridges, waterfalls and precipices. From top to bottom the canvas was piled with *motivi:* it was like a card of patterns of everything that the artist was able to collect on a canvas, but where there lacked all

emotion in the presence of nature; a matter which some of the painters had never felt, and which the others spilled on the road, in passing from the country whence they fetched their sketches to the city where they made them into pictures. The young Dupré said to himself, very justly, that since a painter would be nearer to accuracy in carrying out his work in the presence of the scene, it would be a good thing to produce pictures entirely copied from nature, in order that they might catch the stamp of feeling and sincerity. The day when he hit upon this profession of faith, Jules Dupré indicated for the French school the road to follow; he was the pathfinder of modern art, as he is now its illustrious, respected veteran.

Upon this, to the vast astonishment of the painters, the first production of Dupré emerged, entirely done from nature. This style not only spoke to the eye, as did the composition-pictures of the period, but it spoke also to the soul; it carried within it the feeling that the artist had undergone, his thoughtfulness in the presence of the splendours of creation, with his individual way of being moved by them and expressing them. The more celebrated canvases of this great artist have accordingly been direct transcripts upon the cloth actually used; and thus the painted forest grew out of the incessant contemplation of the natural foliage, the pasture kept its dew, the sky its transparence or the true movement of its clouds. This put an end to the former old-fashioned style, where the painter, between the four walls of the studio, could make no comparison between his work and nature; whereas with these pictures the artist, confronted with the reality, and incessantly directed to the very source of his work, could get astray no more among the jugglery of conventional examples. The *Pasture on the edge of a forest*, which reappeared after forty years at the exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces, fresh as on its first day, radiant with light, with its limpid waters and its forest solidly planted into the ground, had an enthusiastic reception; all those long years had passed over the master-work without tarnishing its freshness and its impressiveness. One was ready to say that this kind of painting was able to renew itself from spring to spring, during a half-century, even as nature's self.

I should like to estimate, in some few words, uttered in the presence of this precursor of the modern landscape-painting school, the veritable tendency of that school. It is not a vulgar realism which carries it so high, it is the marriage of verity with emotion, the strict union between what the eye contemplates and what the heart is feeling. The soul of the painter will vibrate in the canvas with so much more authority in proportion as it submits to the direct shock of nature. The landscape that leaves an imperishable trace in our memory, does so not only because our eye has measured it, but from the emotion which it has communicated to us. There is not a reader but can put it to the test out of his own recollections. Let him transport himself in fancy to the period when for the first time he felt all the charm of some prospect, and just so quickly will he perceive a renewal of the sensation he then experienced; there is a memory of the heart, as of the eye. Realism in art is not to be held, then, as merely the accurate rendering of a scene, but as that gift, reserved alone to the higher order of intelligences, which transmits to the canvas the vibrations of our

life in presence of the realities of things. Jules Dupré, I repeat, was the first who marked out the direct return of art towards the real, and it was a triumphant surprise when the Salon exhibited his first works, entirely painted after nature. However, the taste for painting did not then obtain as it does in our day. Picture-commerce did not exist. A few merchants certainly purchased canvases, but it was to hire them by the month to young ladies who copied them. Princes and the government excepted, there were not half-a-dozen picture collectors in Paris. It was the duke de Nemours who bought the first picture sent to the Salon by Jules Dupré. The sale made a great noise; this son of a king paid twelve hundred francs for the work; for the young painter it was substantially the assurance of fortune and at the same time the official consecration of a career. The revolution of February sent the duke into exile. The third Republic gave him his country again. Among the first visitors who came to present their respects to the duke on his return to France was Jules Dupré. The prince and the painter looked at each other for some moments, to measure the time passed since their separation by each other's wrinkled foreheads and whitened hairs.

" Monseigneur", said the artist, with emotion, " I can never forget that my first encouragement came from your royal highness."

" I still keep your picture ", answered the prince, "let us come and see it."

The canvas was in fact found in the duchess's saloon. In this room the duke, taking the artist's arm, said:

" Your art is happier than either of us, for it has not grown old."

The duke had truly spoken. It is the work that leans directly on nature which can outlast the fashions. The revolution of February plunged the artist again into oblivion just as his future opened smiling before him. Jules Dupré had received two important orders, one from the Government and the other from the duke d'Orléans, when the revolution broke out. The two pictures, sketched out, remain in the artist's studio. He has frequently of late years been offered enormous sums if he would agree to finish them; but the old master, still independent as in the day of his youth, would be powerless to execute any work to order.

Today, as forty years ago, he only paints what is in his thoughts. He is always the same proud artist who, having gone to housekeeping with forty thousand francs of debts, rejected the offer of a merchant who engaged in writing to liquidate these old obligations provided the artist would engage to make some concessions to public taste. Jules Dupré remained hesitating an instant; he seemed by a glance to ask the advice of his wife; the latter, worthy of such an artist, understood him, and replied:

" Refuse ! We shall pay our debts slowly, in time."

The debts are long since paid. A competence has crowned the faith of the brave household. Children have been reared, and their future is assured. Old age has shown a pleasant face to Jules Dupré, and none more than he has deserved the peace of the latter years.

The amount of his works is great. Sustained compositions, like the *Pasture*, are numerous; the masterpieces count by dozens. The Luxembourg Gallery owns two admirable canvases by the painter; no collection worthy of the name can be imagined without a picture by Jules Dupré; the more remarkable have been sold for a bit of bread. The *Pasture*, representing ten months of toil before nature, was paid two thousand francs. *La Vanne*, that magnificent canvas owned by M. Van Praet, minister of the household to the king of the Belgians, three thousand. But what was the amount to him? The

money was not an end, but a means to go and work in the presence of nature. He borrowed from the usurers to be able to keep away from the city.

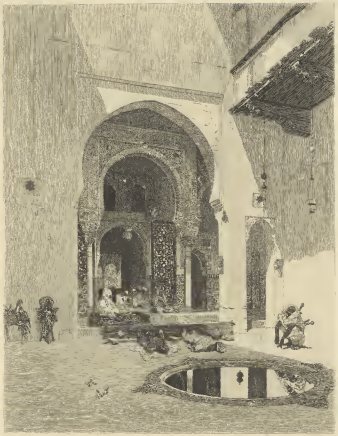
Jules Dupré had hired, at four hundred francs a year, a working-room in the Abbey of Saint-Pierre, in the midst of the Fontainebleau forest. He came but rarely to Paris, and then on his friends' affairs rather than on

his own. It was he who forced Rousseau on the merchants. It was he too who peddled the despised works of Millet among a few collectors of his acquaintance, and who divined Troyon and protected him. He always fled the great city; he regained the solitude of the fields, which had become a necessity. Only the country could restore him the serenity of his thoughts. He returned untiringly to l'Isle-Adam, the region of his early infancy, where he recaptured the enthusiasms of youth. These lovely banks of the Oise have always attracted the painters. Théodore Rousseau long lived beside Dupré at l'Isle-Adam. Daubigny was not far away, at Auvers. Corot gave his kindly smile and his cheerful song, from time to time, to Dupré,

whom he finely termed the Beethoven of landscape. And truly, if the canvases of Corot recalled the adagios of Mozart, the energetic and often terrible subjects of Dupré produced the effect of the symphonies of the immortal Beethoven ; like him the great landscape-painter has invented a new sonorous quality, and has thrown aside the old methods to arrive at the maximum of intensity in his art. The clouds swept by tempests career over the works of Dupré with the vehemence which Beethoven employed when he let loose his orchestra ; the landscape artist has constructed on the grand scale, like the musician, in the same rank of ideas, and with the same impetuosity in going to work. The characteristic mark of the productions of Dupré is power arrived at its highest expression. No master has more energetically rendered the rumbling, threatening voices of nature, its overwhelming effects, before which we collect ourselves, humbled and pensive, as we plunge our thoughts in a symphony of Beethoven.

Sixty years of labour have not spoiled this great artist. Looking back to his difficult beginnings, thinking with a bitter smile, even now, of the fifty francs hardly snatched from fate in return for a canvas where the young painter had thrown his whole soul and art, the remembrance of a thousand successes lights up that fine artistic head, energetic and angular, to which the white beard and the long locks floating to the wind give a kind of apostolic air. Always young in spirit, he now beholds, at l'Isle-Adam, which saw his first hesitations as an artist, his own apotheosis. Latterly, and to be nearer his grandchildren, Jules Dupré chose to sacrifice his weak side for the fields to his tenderness for the family. He installed himself like other people, in a neat house in the rue Ampère ; but the tide of visitors, of merchants and collectors, the general movement and noise which arise about an artist in renown, seized upon his spirit and paralysed the free course of his thoughts. Paris deprived him of his vital element, of that out-of-doors where he had passed all his life ; everything was lacking in Paris — for the summer, the long promenades under the trees ; for the winter, the melancholy of a landscape stripped of verdure, and covered with snow ; for all seasons, the solitude given up to silent meditation. This he was fain to seek again in the little house at l'Isle-Adam, where from his studio, at all hours, the artist can look out on nature. His thoughts have need of space and air ; the landscape-painter cannot live far from the landscape. He needs an hourly access to nature, whether in the loneliness of the fields, or before the infinitude of the Ocean, for which he has lately been smitten with a true artist-lover's passion. In fact, at the period when other painters are tired with the work they have done, and

only dream of rest, Jules Dupré was destined to form a new evolution. He was in the habit of passing some weeks of the summer at Cayeux-sur-Mer, looking out on the sea from his window. One morning he awoke, and, struck with the mysterious effects of the Ocean enveloped in the profound heavens stretched upon it, the artist said to himself:



"To have that under one's eyes and not paint it, is stupid."

From this day dates the transformation of Jules Dupré in a painter of marines. He took up this specialty, a novelty to him, with an individual kind of interpretation of the sea. The master-thought which guides him is discoverable, as in all the artist's work, and it is, here, to paint the effects of mystery belonging to the Ocean, the melancholy which overcomes the spirit in contemplating the infinite. Jules Dupré's opinion is that the painter's entire being should be reflected in his art. This is so perfectly true of the hermit of l'Isle-Adam, that without knowing him we divine him from his pictures; grave and thoughtful, with a shade of sadness left upon him by the years of combat. He walks straight, his hand does not tremble, and the blue and gentle eye, in a most energetic head, betrays a chosen soul humbling

itself before nature, in recognition of the tempests which she has let loose in its thoughts.

The porcelain-painter's apprentice of sixty years ago has likewise managed to perfect his literary education, which was neglected among the necessities of his early years. The works of the great writers are familiar to him, as if he had passed his whole life in examining them. He is fond of quoting in conversation the axioms of one author after another, whence he has derived the principles of his own peculiar art. To a purchaser who was teasing him to finish a picture in a few hours, with the aid of that sureness of hand and eye which he has acquired, Jules Dupré replied in my presence :

"You think, then, that I know my profession? why, my poor fellow, if I had nothing more to find out and to learn I could not paint any longer."

In these words is his whole life of search and study. Truly, the day when self-doubt should vanish from an artist's mind, the day when he should not feel before his canvas the trouble which throws the brain into fever, on that day he would be no better than a workman taking up in the morning the task of the evening before, ploddingly and without hesitation, but also without nobility. The day when Jules Dupré should open his studio without a thrill, and leave it without discouragement, he would consider that he had arrived at the end of what he could do — and he would be right.

IV

Among the great artists of 1830, as they are called, there reigned, as we have already said, a profound brotherhood of spirit, founded upon the high esteem which each one had for the genius of the others. But they all considered Eugène Delacroix as the most glorious among them; they all had for him an admiration without limit. He was in a sort the standard-bearer of the grand phalanx; the others grouped themselves around his art as around a sacred banner. This homage paid by common consent to the genius of Delacroix was derived from sincere artistic enthusiasm and not from comradeship, for the singular character of

the artist, still somewhat incomprehensible, kept him a stranger to cordial everyday relations; he shut himself away from others; his private life was rigorously sealed up, and his residence was inaccessible. Delacroix had the gloomiest apprehensions about his health; every hour had a double importance in his thoughts; he intrenched himself in his solitude accordingly, so as not to waste an instant, receiving but few friends, and showing himself but sparingly in society. What he was in his commencements, such we find him at the term of his glorious career; his life was expressed in the single word, labour.

To be able to pass his life thus without a thought of the externals, Eugène Delacroix had an important auxiliary. His father, who had held an important place in public administration and in diplomacy, left him an inheritance, some fifteen thousand francs income, which really represented a fine fortune in the first half of our century. Besides, he had not the slightest taste for extravagance, he lived a quiet life, entirely given up to art, and he had no desire to dazzle his contemporaries. Only caring for an independent existence, having no need to make money and no love for it, Eugène Delacroix was thus enabled to march in his headlong path without any concessions, as without hesitation. No artist was recognized as his teacher, for we should not reckon the brief stay in the studio of Guérin, an artist who never concealed his profound contempt for his rebellious pupil.

It was in the contemplation of the masterpieces in the Louvre that his genius developed; and for modern work, all his admiration fixed itself on Géricault, who foresaw the lofty destiny of his youthful friend and felt for him the truest tenderness. Between the great tragic poet of the *Shipwreck of the Medusa* and the future author of *The Bark of Dante* it was easy to breed a sympathy; each had the same ideal: living drama. The admiration of Eugène Delacroix for Géricault was unlimited; indeed one day when the master had asked his young friend to give him one of his sketches, the youth, in the overflow of his pride and joy at such a request, put knee to earth as he made his offering, like a mortal before a divinity. Géricault raised him up and kissed him affectionately, saying. " You will be a master ". When Eugène Delacroix exhibited his first work, in 1822, M. Thiers, then art-critic of the *Constitutionnel*, hailed him enthusiastically.

This young man of twenty-three was in reality the master divined by Géricault.

M. Thiers's enthusiasm for the vastest genius produced by French painting has never been belied. The art-critic had taken up the painter at the commencement. The more Delacroix was attacked, the more M. Thiers exalted him; by his pen he gradually forced him on the public, and later, when he was become a statesman, M. Thiers carried his favourite painter safely through the uproar and got him the order for the state decorative paintings in the Louvre and the Chamber of Deputies. It is impossible to narrate the glorious life of Eugène Delacroix without first paying homage to the discernment of the art-critic and to the enthusiasm he displayed in defending the works so abundantly reviled, against the blind and the deaf of the time.

The controlling note in Eugène Delacroix's painting is the dramatic note. We might say of him that he is the Shakspeare of art; he has the great author's majesty of conception, his art of painting a character in a few strokes, and his power of colour. That which interests him is the drama of all epochs, of every literature, and of every place. *The Bark of Dante* is only the first step, to which succeed those innumerable masterpieces, *The Scio Massacres*, *Tasso among the Madmen*, *The Assassination of the Bishop of Liège*, *The Amende honorable*, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, *The Bark of Christ*, *Hamlet and the Gravedigger*, *The Morocco Coast*, *The Barricade*, *The Death of Sardanapalus* — little imports the subject. Whether he dips in profane or sacred history, in historical anecdote or in the life of the wild beast, it is the drama and always the drama which thrills in his magnificent canvases, which inspires and overcomes us in the contemplation of his works;

the drama which shakes the soul because we feel that the soul of the grand painter is in it; he overthrows us by the sublimity of the presentment, the energy of the execution, the wizard colour. In Eugène Delacroix genius did not wait for years; it burst forth at the first stroke, powerful, and so to speak in its highest expression. Here the effort of the start is no mere indication by which to fix a point of departure; it is the representation of the whole career; it is as the manifesto, as the programme never departed from, of a long, glorious artistic reign. In truth, whatever the works to come shall be like, the first canvas shows their intellectual germ; what Delacroix occupies himself about, what moves him, is the drama. The subject is no great thing for this grand artist; it is naught but a pretext; the dramatic impression proceeding from it is everything. When Delacroix paints the magnificent *Christ upon the Cross*, a canvas which appeared as one of the capital masterpieces of this exhibition which reckoned so many, it is the supreme drama which inspires him; what he desires to render is the grand crime of the crucifixion, and not the Crucified himself. This Son of God is not the

traditional Christ, correctly nailed to the cross; it is the visionary apparition bearing a testimony against religious persecution, the martyr who has suffered his doom and whom we see across the dreadful solitude which is the image of his abandonment. He cares little to paint correctly an academic study according to the routine formula; what he wants to paint is the grand drama, the conclusive moral impression; his Christ has lived, his flesh has thrilled, his heart has bled in truth; he is the incarnation of all martyrdom, of consummate crime left in the midst of the indifference of nature. There are no tears, no lamentations to communicate an emotion; it exhales all naturally from this sole figure; and it suffices for depicting the entire horror of the scene and for filling the soul with veneration and profoundest pity. This is the effect of art in its loftiest development, art whose influence is terrifying in its simplicity. And thus we find the artist in all his works. His tiger that rolls on the ground roaring, in a landscape of grandest aspect, is like an incarnation of bestial strength, scattering terror around it. The dramatic composer is always alongside his genius, in whatever form it is manifested. He is the earliest of the orientalists, going to Morocco, and in this sunlit country it is still the drama which inspires him, whether in the *Convulsionists of Tangiers,* or in the *Giaour*, in the *Lion Hunt*, in the *Horseman*, who, bending over his steed, with bournous flying in the wind, shoots across the desert like a vision of destruction. Eugène Delacroix had taken from the chilled hands of Géricault the banner of that revolt which this great genius had raised against the correct and frigid art born of science, without one throb of the soul; he carried it proudly and aloft across a hundred battles to the very end, for the glory of French painting in our century. He became the chief of the new school, called romantic, of which Victor Hugo was the apostle in literature. Like the grand poet, the illustrious painter was vilified, attacked, and hissed. His art triumphed, even like Hugo's, over all its opposers. It forced itself slowly on the public, through innumerable battles. Now it is the pride of our painting-school, as the works of Hugo are the radiant glory of our French nineteenth-century literature.

The so-called classical school, men of a rare perfection in their science, understood nothing of this art, an art bursting from the painter's heart, with a passion which sometimes made it rise to the most impregnable altitudes, yet which sometimes, by its very exaggeration, brought it down again to the ground; for the works of Delacroix have their weak passages, I admit, because they are human works, because they are not born of cold calculations of the mind, and because the

vexations of the painter, in following his ideal, pierce through them. But the aim pursued by Delacroix was to force upon us that tragical influence which he sought, and which he always attained; we may criticise him on more than one point, but not until after we have recovered from

the shock of this forcible genius, a shock which the most stubborn mind cannot help feeling.

In this case we should lose our labour in trying to guess the man from his works. This intractable revolutionist was in private life a coolly correct gentleman, of rare distinction. When he appeared in a drawing-room of the faubourg Saint-Germain, where he cultivated the closest relations, it was

surprising to see this mutineer, as they called him at the Academy, as a chevalier of most finished elegance, looking far more like a diplomate than an artist who was overthrowing his epoch. Delacroix was of tall stature, and notwithstanding his invalid air he allured every one by his personal grace and by the lofty qualities of his mind, to which his correspondence bears witness. Highly reserved and almost timid, he talked little, but never did a commonplace come from his lips. His eye, of an unusual intensity in a head beaming with the noblest energy, could strip his interlocutor to the very marrow. When people spoke to him about the impassioned attacks against his works, he confounded the flatterers with a polished, icy, discouraging smile. At bottom, it was a great torture to him to see himself misunderstood, but he was too proud to let this be perceived; he made no display of his bitterness. No one ever heard him complain of any person or thing whatever.

His unappreciated masterpieces accumulated in his plain simple studio, and the great artist felt no discontent. Delacroix was one of those tempered souls who rely for their satisfactions on the secrets of their work, with an impartial contempt for adulation or for insult. He had arranged his life in his own fashion, and above all in such sort that nothing was to disturb him from his art. Except a few sparse familiars, to whom were later added the princes of Orléans, no one could penetrate his existence; even woman's influence, if it ever coloured his life, left no trace there; no one might boast of having diverted the great artist from his art; no one ever had empire over him; the flatteries of men and the allurement of woman remained equally ineffectual for that iron will, which would not let itself be indented. It is thus that Delacroix was able to leave such voluminous productions. We should be much deceived if we conjectured that these masterpieces, apparently executed so freely, had come without effort; they are on the contrary the result of painful toil and incessant hesitations; if the artist's pains do not appear in them, they were none the less formidable and often agonizing. Before these admirable productions hostile routine was obliged to lay down its arms at length. The renown of Delacroix ceased not to grow in the midst of the tumult provoked by his style. The Institute, which had reviled him, comprehended that it must needs make a compromise with the master who contemned it. And now this mutineer, this insurgent, this revolutionary, is about to enter the Academy. What protests — and what alarms! *Annibal ad portas!* Delacroix undertook the siege of the Academy, and went to seat himself, with a smile on his lips, among his worst enemies.

His admission to the Institute was the greatest satisfaction of his life to Delacroix. He, the insurgent so long reviled, was about to receive this acknowledgment of his ever-increasing influence, on the part of the very men who had never ceased to combat against him, who had never disguised the profound scorn inspired in them by this great obstinate painter, this rebel to all official and academic art, this mutineer against routine, who till now had lived in his singularity. It was not without

difficulty, and this penetration of the Academy by the greatest painter of our century was pushed on for many years before succeeding. M. Robert-Fleury, the historical artist, was the chief agent in the diplomatic negotiations. Though a member of the Institute, he did justice to Delacroix, and he considered with the utmost good sense that the election of the great artist would be an act by which the Institute honoured itself. It needed to gain one after the other before at last Delacroix, a pure genius, could attain the place left vacant in the Institute by Paul Delaroche, whose triumphs are already forgotten, and whom posterity

has now lowered from the foremost rank he once occupied to condemn him to the third. Eugène Delacroix, barricaded in his pride, would not consent to take any steps himself; yet, with his unerring tact, his fine intelligence, his innate grace, he conquered the members of the Institute one by one, when he met them accidentally in drawing-rooms. In secret they were still hostile, and their anger against the innovator continued the same : but Delacroix had grown to such a height, and his renown had so effectually battered from the breach the old walls of the Institute, that it was necessary at last to capitulate with the besieger.

Eugène Delacroix received the news of his nomination with a joy which he did not even try to conceal. He, so reserved and self-contained, gave himself up to the overflow of his triumph. Not that he attached an overweening importance to the palm-embroidered coat and the pearl-hilted sword, but because his art, so long disdained, had forced a citadel deemed invincible. Once in his place, he won over the most backward by his ready wit and high distinction. People repeat the story, whenever the occasion presents, that Delacroix many times expressed regret at not having passed through the School of Rome, from which most of the members of the Institute had issued. This was simply the act of politeness of a great mind, nothing more, — offered to the Institute to console it, on the part of a man of social education, as we offer a card in a house where we have been welcomed. What is certain is that Delacroix in fact regretted nothing; and his style, which continued independent of Institute influence to the very close, is there to prove it.

As he had passed through life, Eugène Delacroix died without any enfeebling of the will. This valetudinarian painter, who did double day's work for fear of not being alive on the morrow, this invalid still more in imagination than reality, this sensitive genius whom a breath seemed fit to overthrow, died in 1863, at the age of sixty-four years, after having for nearly a half century endured an excessive taskwork of every day and every hour. Delacroix passed through these fifty years of toil without taking a moment's rest. When he went away from Paris, it was to go and work in his country-house of Champrosay, which was closed against the curious, like his studio in Paris. He had a scorn of picture-commerce; he seemed to distrust an excess of prosperity as if it were a dissolving element for art; otherwise it would be hard to explain the obstinate simplicity with which he surrounded himself.

The death scene of Delacroix is of itself an imposing drama. He had lived alone, and he wished to die in peace. When he felt the supreme solu-

tion approaching, he directed his faithful housekeeper to receive no one whatever, sent for a lawyer and dictated to him his final will with remarkable calmness and with that lucidity of mind which only left him with his last sigh. Then he firmly awaited death, without a shudder, without a complaint, without a regret. He died self-concentrated as he had lived, without bravado as without weakness; neither complaint nor challenge, in the face of this death which steadily advanced. He passed away in a last smile, as a man who had well employed his life, and who was sure that his name would be a possession of posterity.

V

Diaz was already old when I had the honour of being introduced to him. In the course of our first interview, I mentioned that I had a little panel of his of fifteen centimètres, a perfect gem; a baby lying in a cradle, with the mother guarding it, and the sunshine filtering into the modest chamber from an open window, with the reverberations of a dusty cloud of gold. The artist asked leave to pay me a visit for the purpose of seeing the picture, to which belonged, he said, a class of interesting souvenirs. He came next day, and stood for some time thoughtfully before his work; he looked at it affectionately, and it seemed to me that, with the back of his hand, he was wiping away a tear. He was a man of hardy aspect, and in him such a sudden weakness might be deemed surprising.

"Would you be good enough to sell me this little picture?" he said; "it belongs to a part of my youth."

"I cannot sell it you," I replied, "but since you value it, allow me to offer it to you."

Diaz protested; he could not accept a gift, and as I declined to take his money, we agreed that he should exchange the picture for another. He immediately took down the little gem from the wall, and asked to carry it away with him without loss of time. On his face, now radiant, all his joy was visible.

"You cannot imagine the pleasure you are giving me", he said.

" This woman and this infant are my own family. The puppet was in its cradle one fine summer day ; the mother had fallen asleep beside it. In one hour I did the sketch from nature. It used to hang over my bed, and it cheered my awakening every day for years. Then arrived a morning when we were more in want of necessaries than usual. A dealer came along, and offered me a hundred and fifty francs. I told him I valued that study especially, and preferred that he should choose two other pictures for the same price ; he insisted on taking that one in particular ; as ill-luck would

have it, my rent was due next day; I was not in a position to be too particular. He gave me a banknote of one hundred francs, and ten hundred-sous pieces. I made him out a receipt, and he never perceived that he was carrying off a bit of my heart. Ah! it was hard ! "

Then, made eloquent by remembrance, Diaz told me about his beginnings and their terrible hours, the perpetual struggle for daily bread, accompanying his recital by pounding the floor with his wooden leg, and gesticulating like the Southerner he was. He had the appearance of an old soldier telling the dangerous adventures of his fights. Diaz was of lofty height; his head was not handsome, but of remarkable energy; notwithstanding the artist's age, his hair had remained conspicuously black; his

thick moustache and tuft completed his military air; he spoke by spurts; his rough voice would be taken for that of habitual command. On the whole, what you would call a genuine sort of man, most free in his avowals, very open in his communications. Through the simplicity of his language you felt the throbbings of a heart of gold.

He wrapped up his treasure in a newspaper, and made off with an active step, whistling a merry tune. When he had got it home, he hung it up in his chamber as formerly, this family souvenir, just above the bed; he fancied it shed on him every morning something like a ray of his youth.

The excellent man preserved to the end a kind recollection of this early incident of our relations. If I may say for myself that I venerated the aged and brave artist, I may add that for me he was undoubtedly a friend; how many long hours have we passed together in his studio, in pleasant conversations about the men of his day! He was one of the those who gave celebrity to the village of Barbizon, in the forest of Fontainebleau; he had lived there with Théodore Rousseau and Millet; with Rousseau especially,

whom he considered the " Master "; in his private collection he had two enchanting little landscapes of his; and when you talked to Diaz of his own art, he would carry you off to the works of his great acquaintance, saying, " Here are the sugarplums ". In all the great artists of that generation you perceived the mutual esteem they entertained for each other's talent.

In the group of painters beyond the average, Diaz de la Pena is the great artist of the fantastical. Anything serves him as a pretext for bringing to light his marvellous aptitude as a colourist. He has not the science of Rousseau nor the poesy of Corot, still less the severe grandeur of Dupré. He renders the enchantments of the landscape flooded with sunshine, or the forest plunged in luminous twilight, with beams filtering through the thick leafage; he dazzles the eye with all the seductions of a grand colourist; by these obvious qualities which affect even the uninitiated spectator, he gets closer to the latter than other landscapists of the time. He is the grand virtuoso of the palette, making sport of difficulties. With him everything is of the first impulse; his work is thrown off with brio; the enchantment of the colour carries it along. We can imagine him in the solitudes of the Fontainebleau forest, making the wooden leg resound on the earth and singing with all his lungs to let off his exuberant nature. The countrymen whom Millet stopped to regard with compassionate thoughts did not attract him. He dots the pond-side, where the sun gleams, with peasant-girls, mere little red touches. In his sun-gilt landscapes Diaz put such figures as offered, by their costumes, a pretext for the wealth of his palette. The *Descent of the Bohemians* is the fullest expression of this style; here all is life and air; the band is coming down a steep path; through the foliage the sun rains down its beams, and floods the whole picture with a transparent and luminous half-light; it is a perfect dazzle to the eye, like all the works of this great colourist. From the Orient, as he passes through it, he only collects the remembrances of silky stuffs and golden embroideries, spreading forth their pride in the sun; from Italy he only preserves the method of the colourist Veronese, whom he often equals in the attractiveness, if not in the conception, of his work. As for mythology, it is merely his excuse for modelling in full impasto and in open daylight the nymphs and the Dianas.

Those who knew Diaz in his youth remember him as the most expansive of natures; the man was alive like his painting, always acting from the first impulse. His words, guiltless of the refinements of conversation, were as energetic as his brush; he said roughly what he thought,

in whatever company he found himself; the style of his talk was the same in the tavern or in the drawing-room; when in good humour he would drown the noise of the talking by formidable peals of laughter; the least annoyance would evoke from him the oaths of an old sailor, to the accompaniment of reiterated strokes of the wooden leg — the "pestle", he called it. When poor, he laughed at hardship; when rich, he remained simple. As money flowed in, at the close of his life, he only saw in it the means

for satisfying the tastes of the artist, for the purchase of the pictures of his celebrated friends, without any cheapening, of rare potteries, and luxurious rugs, which made the oddest contrast with his commonplace mahogany furniture. It was the type of the old-time artist, the good fellow, frank and laughing; a trifle amused his juvenile spirit; you were sure to make him laugh aloud with some old warmed-up anecdote; he would writhe in a spasm of mad hilarity when you took off an actor in his presence, and a comic song at the dessert of an old-fashioned dinner was worth to him all the fashionable balls in the world.

At first sight Diaz was not attractive; his nature appeared rude;

except for his glowing eyes, there was nothing about his person of the distinction of his art. But after penetrating to his intimacy, his delicate nature, so strangely in contrast with the surface, opened out like a delicious landscape which you discover after climbing a craggy road. At the heart of that rough bark you penetrated to the most exquisite refinements, fatherly affection in its most touching manifestations, and manly friendship without any grand word but full of delicate attentions. His element was the sunshine; in summer he braved its hottest beams; in winter he made it live again out of his marvellous palette. During the late war, at Brussels, he worked in a cold gloomy hotel chamber looking out on a court of cheerless aspect. But the painter, though old, had brought along his fatherland in a colour-box; in this gloomy workroom, bowed down with patriotic anxieties, he lived with his memory, in the midst of his beloved forest of Fontainebleau, which he transported to his canvas; the exuberant sunshine of his pictures seemed to warm that sad refuge of his exile; his art was everything to Diaz, and he found a refuge from the troubles of life in his painting. His career was a long dream, in which he perceived an imaginary world beside the actualities of earthly landscapes; it was something like a fairy spectacle, streaming with silks and velvets and gold; under the groves he called forth pages holding greyhounds in leash, châtelaines richly dight, nymphs with flesh of exquisite tone. Sometimes under his magic pencil these improvisations took a more lofty flight towards grand art, as in his famous *Diana*, who seems to have escaped from the works of the old masters.

Diaz was above all an improvisatore and a creator of fantasies. He himself acknowledged what was lacking in his pictures to place them quite in the first rank. He found himself overflowed with those powers of colour which constitute his glory, but to which he sacrificed the rest. Yet we hardly detect the occasional want of completeness in the forms of his figures, so entirely are we under the charm of the colour. Ah, 'tis a great painter!

After the war, when the world precipitated itself on Paris, to buy at a bargain her art-productions which were expected to be at a changed tariff after so many disasters, there arrived this phenomenon; the prices of pictures rapidly tripled themselves, from the increased demand. Then fortune came to Diaz. He purchased at the sea-side village of Etretat a pretty villa in the midst of a garden, where the flowers, which he loved so heartily and copied with such rare technic, flaunted themselves in the sun. He had under his eyes, from the window, with the first ray of dawn, all the astonishments of colour; behind the house, which was set

against the cliffs, a climbing path led to the downs whence the Ocean was visible. Here was where he liked to rest in the contemplation of infinitude, and before this sublime side of creation his artist's heart expanded. Often, in his moments of familiar confidence, he expressed, among his professional comments, a kind of regret, as if he had taken a false road in life. He felt himself near his end, and, instead of little pictures, he vowed that he meant only to make vast pictures, in which he might express all his art and all his ambition for the eyes of posterity.

The coming on of winter was always dangerous to him. In 1876, Diaz felt himself attacked by an affection of the chest which rendered all work impossible. He went to Mentone, where for an instant he seemed to revive with a new existence. It is there that he executed his last pictures. Death took him by surprise, still at his work. It was impossible to overcome this character still full of energy, during the final sickness, unless by taking the brush from his hands and shattering it. Broken at once in frame and in spirit, Diaz did not resist longer. Without his work, life offered no attraction. From his deathbed, through the open window, he beheld the landscape bathed with sunshine, and the great enchanter died while looking his last on the day-star which inspired all his work.

VI

OOKING out on the boulevard Malesherbes, at the corner of the rue Legendre, is found a little mansion of fantastic pattern, adapted for privacy of living. The building strikes a different note from the architecture of the new houses which surround it; it has the air of imitating a cloister. Through the windows, which are hardly ever opened, the passer-by sees no trace of modern luxury such as betrays itself at ordinary windows by the pompous show of brilliant hangings and overloaded gilding. There are no saloons, properly speaking, in this artistic residence; instead, we find two large studios which communicate and occupy all the width of the first floor. Here, from morning till evening, one of the greatest artists of our century bends over a task which has continued for fifty years with the same conscientiousness, the

same industry. The greatest glory of M. Meissonier before posterity will be, not merely to have been one of the most illustrious masters of his time, but also to have sacrificed no particle of his personal dignity at any period of his long career. The history of all the arts is degraded by the numerous examples of weakness manifested by the grandest talents, when, arrived at the height of the position gained, they have thrown out, as a bait to the purchaser, works conceived with the sole eye to the money-return, without a thought of self-respect, or of that integrity in workmanship which is due towards the public in return for the artist's prominent situation. M. Meissonier incontestably has the credit of having refused to sacrifice his conscience to considerations foreign to his art, at any period of his life. This « respectability », in the English sense, is beyond contradiction; and those who make certain reserves in praising his work are bound to salute respectfully this fine professional conscientiousness.

Revolutions in artistic opinion produce a kind of inconsistency in the public mind, like those of politics. Delacroix, carrying on the impulse of Géricault, had passed across French art with his impressive dramas, and

with the fury of his style, commended by all the enchantments of his incomparable colouring. Third-rate painters misrepresented the principles of this grand style in adopting all the defects of the master, without his genius. Boldness of conception was changed for a perfect oblivion of pictorial composition; audacity of colouring became wilful eccentricity; and artists lived under the anarchy of a headlong romantic inspiration, whether in choice of subject or in incoherent manipulation. I know no better comparison for this crisis than that of our contemporary musical composition, set off its balance by the genius of Richard Wagner. In the focus of this disorder arose one fine day M. Meissonier with his miniature works of such accurate design and scrupulous execution. The neglected art of the Low Countries was born again of the pencil of this youth from Lyons, offspring of parents in modest circumstances; it reappeared like a protest against debauch, a final appeal to the artistic conscience. In a national school committed to every extravagance, what was there left to do for a disciple of Terburg, of Mieris, of Gérard Dow? He was scornfully dubbed the painter of little toy images. Then, as M. Meissonier's studies steadily brought him nearer to nature, he was treated as a photographer. The indifferent copyists of Delacroix could not sufficiently show their contempt for the conscientious toiler. They argued him down with the same fury and the same intolerance that the classical professors of the Institute had let loose against Delacroix himself. They gave no credit to M. Meissonier for the severe design seen in his work, for the irreproachable execution, for that lofty artistic conscience incapable of ever contradicting itself, qualities which have been surpassed by none of his predecessors, which guaranteed for his name the respect of posterity. The moneyless youth from Lyons, the pupil of Léon Cogniet, was destined to become one of the greatest artists of the present century.

The principal reproach made against M. Meissonier was that of choosing his subjects in past ages. He did not live in his epoch, they said, he was not a modern. Why did he constantly go back to Louis XIII or Louis XIV? The merit of the Dutch, on whom the style of M. Meissonier depended, was precisely in leaving us a kind of pictorial history of their civilisation in their work. It is easily said. But when a painter lives at a period which has no style, and which constantly refers itself towards the older furniture to garnish itself with an artistic effect, a period which has no attractive costumes, or of a nature to allure the artist, the latter is surely obliged to find elsewhere the elements we deny him.

It is impossible to esteem the eminent artist at his value when one has

not learned by heart the length and breadth of his work. The least panel by M. Meissonier is the result of many searchings and of studies without end. The walls of his studio bear witness to his conscientious method. On the eye-line, all around the two ateliers, are the proofs of his perpetual efforts. We can there read the sincerity and wonderful determination of a man who leaves nothing to chance, who never loses sight of nature, and who makes no account of time when it behoves him to carry on a work to the pitch of perfection which the artist desires. Drawings, painted sketches, statuettes in wax, have been prepared before the final undertaking; it is the

scale-practice of this inimitable executant, before he plays his piece; for the least figure, M. Meissonier makes repeated preparatory studies; he never attacks it finally until after he has long paused before the natural object, scrutinising it in detail before painting it at large. If the pains are nowhere betrayed in the finished work of M. Meissonier, — the very charm of it being just in this apparent ease — they are none the less prodigious. The famous artist judges that while there remains anything to do, nothing is done; the ecstasy of the critic gives little solace to his life when he is not satisfied with himself. The day when M. Meissonier sets the signature at the bottom of the finished task, he is satisfied that he has poured his talent completely into his picture. If he deceives himself, it is in good faith, and not by any debauchery of that professional conscience which is

preserved by this seventy-years-old artist; you could not get from him at any price a work which he does not himself judge to be carried out to its full intensity. More times than one has he destroyed with slashes of his knife some picture of immense pecuniary value because he has condemned it as unworthy of his great reputation.

Jealous to preserve his grand situation intact in the present, M. Meissonier is equally careful of his renown before posterity. Finding his works dispersed in the galleries of the four quarters of the globe, he has deemed

that he might properly select two of his pictures to bequeath to the Louvre. He has several times been offered three hundred thousand francs for two of the panels which figured in the exhibition to whose memory this work is devoted; but the *Etcher,* as well as the *Man at the Window,* will only leave the studio of the artist to pass one day to the Louvre. Never has painter penetrated further into nature than M. Meissonier has done in these two pictures, which he justly considers as the highest expression of his art.

Another subject at the Exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces indicated that evolution which was made by M. Meissonier, about the middle of his career, towards military art. Before finally undertaking it, the painter spent several years in preparatory studies. An artist so

conscientious as he could leave nothing to luck, nor satisfy himself with painting his subject pretty nearly right or superficially. One should see, in the studio of the master, the innumerable studies of horses made before the first cavalryman was painted. Himself an enthusiastic horseman, M. Meissonier made the horse an object of long investigations. Not only did he continually draw the animal from nature, but he wished to live familiarly with horses, so as to be always observing them. At his country place at Poissy, the painter formed a well-furnished stud, where his horses were always found ready to be mounted, in order that he might observe their most varied movements. Others would be grazing at liberty on the lawns, always under the eye of the painter, who thus examined them in action and in repose. He had them to gallop over ploughed ground or in fields of grain, arranged in his park, to note the disturbance made by their hoofs. Patiently, with his own characteristic tenacity, M. Meissonier made himself gradually an authority on the horse, as on the human figure, and it was only after having studied the equine race for many years that this man of wonderful conscience set it in his pictures. In this thorough way he has treated the epic of the first Empire in a great number of compositions, of which the most perfect, *The Retreat from Russia in 1814*, is not merely a masterpiece of composition and execution, but again is a grand page of history in limited form.

Such immense labour, with such a fine artistic conscientiousness, must needs win over the most recalcitrant. Today, M. Meissonier is spectator of his own apotheosis. A half-century of incessant toil has made the Lyons artist the most celebrated of living painters. The prices of his pictures have reached a formidable figure, unknown till his time. The most valuable eulogium that can be made of M. Meissonier is to say that he has never yielded to the seduction of a million francs, though it comes to him in all its perfidy; this man of seventy years has resisted all the temptations of money, in an age when it overthrows and controls the bravest. The great artist, whose works are so dearly paid, is not rich, as might be supposed, not only because his grand seigneur's caprices absorb his revenues, but because he has never done anything for the sake of money. His signature has become such a capital that, by distributing it prodigally on slight pieces of work, M. Meissonier might gain a million francs a year; but his conscience is so refined that he had rather remain for whole years without making a penny than throw upon the market a work unworthy of his renown. What the public pays for in the case of this artist is the long, and above all the arduous, study; the endless hesitations

before any new class of work; the professional honesty of the man who reckons neither his time nor his trouble in keeping up his art to the level which the master aims at, and which he attains in nearly every case. The famous painter, whose works sell not at their weight in gold but at their weight in banknotes, is not a wealthy man; his whole investments consist simply in the innumerable and magnificent studies kept in the atelier; their value is very great, and the artist refuses to sell them at any price, because these mute witnesses of his existence seem to him like the diary of his whole professional career, written with his own hand from

day to day; they are the familiars of his pains and joys; to the spectator of these thousands of studies they are the proofs of that sincerity and determination which the painter lavishes on all his works, without distinction of size, kind or price.

When we estimate M. Meissonier only by the pictures which are presented to the eyes of the public, when we render justice, simply as before the result attained, to the vast sum of talent lavished often upon a mere panel of four inches square, we are far from appreciating him at his just value. To establish M. Meissonier at his veritable rank in our estimation we must make a calculation, after many an investigation, of all the states through which the work has passed before arriving at publicity, of all the studies which have prepared for the actual painting and accompanied it; nothing is left to luck in this painting, every effect is based on

profound reflection, on watchfulness without truce, in the face of the natural model. There is why M. Meissonier is such a great artist. To those who take exception to the scale of his pictures, and regret in the name of so-called grand art that the famous painter has kept his work down to a narrow measure, I may be permitted to say that in art this is a secondary question, and that the picture entitled " *1814* ", in its little frame, is one of the most powerful dramas in our century's painting, even as M. Meissonier is one of the loftiest artists of our time.

Nor is M. Meissonier any more responsible for his imitators, for those who try on his shoes, than was Delacroix for the daubers who swarmed in his wake. People have often reproached our artist for belittling the painting of his time, in setting the fashion of miniature panels. It would be a more just remark to say that he had brought back by his art a whole generation to a respect for nature. Doubtlessly, the painting of our artist is not art in its entirety, but it is one of its most interesting manifestations that our age has seen, and the name of the lofty painter of little pictures is more securely fixed before the future than if he had misconceived his extraordinary gifts, and had brushed great canvases of quality inferior to those which we see signed with the name of Meissonier, the first painter of the close of our century, and one of the most astonishing artists who have made it illustrious.

VII

EE, neighbour, " said Jules Dupré as he entered the residence of the barytone Baroilhet, of the French Opera, " I am going to offer you a good bargain. I have a masterpiece to dispose of. "

" A masterpiece? " repeated the famous singer, " and who has executed the masterpiece? "

" Théodore Rousseau. "

" Yes, he is a man of talent, plenty of talent, " said Baroilhet, " but money is scarce. "

" You can pay in two instalments, " insinuated Dupré, " two hundred and fifty francs a month. "

" Where is your masterpiece? " demanded Baroilhet.

Jules Dupré leaned out of window and made signs to a porter, in waiting at the door, to come up stairs. " Look here, " he said to his friend.

This barytone, Baroilhet, then at the height of his fame, was a man of taste, one of the first who comprehended the important advance of landscape painting in 1830. He uttered a cry of surprise and enthusiasm, for it was really a chef-d'œuvre which Jules Dupré was offering him for five hundred francs. It was " *The Hoar-frost,* " one of Rousseau's most celebrated canvases, which is worth now at least one hundred thousand francs. Since morning, Jules Dupré had carried the canvas up and down through Paris without being able to find a niche for it. He was unwilling to go home unsuccessful, for he had surely vowed to Rousseau that he would sell it. Now it was done. Baroilhet counted out the complete sum with a sigh, saying :

" Paintings will be my ruin in the end. "

Twenty years afterwards, when Baroilhet sold his collection, the *Hoar-frost* reached the price of seventeen thousand francs.

" Well, " said Jules Dupré, " I hope I am not the cause of your making a bad bargain? "

" Granted, " retorted the vocalist proudly, " but twenty years ago you found nobody but me in all the streets of Paris who would pay the five hundred francs. "

In that group of landscape-painters of foremost rank whose destiny was to restore modern art, in France, to the magnificent position of Ruysdaël and Hobbema, Théodore Rousseau is unquestionably the one who has gone furthest into the secret of nature. To be just, Jules Dupré had pointed him the way, but when once launched, Rousseau had separated from his comrade to pursue his own destinies. A love for nature had been formed, in this tailor's son, in the humble position which he occupied with one of his relations who had a saw-factory in Franche-Comté. While accompanying his employer in his professional tours in search of growing timber, this youth, among the trees, came to catch the scent of the grand principles of art, of that theory on which was to rise, later, the mighty scaffold of his renown. When he got leave to follow his bent, at the age of fifteen years, Théodore Rousseau was confided to an indifferent artist named Rémond, who passed for the foremost landscape-painter of the time. He was taught what was then called grand art, the kind of " historical " landscape where figures of the Bible or of ancient history strayed through conventional scenery. Those proud ones of 1820, those

forgotten ones today, took no notice of the vegetation which surrounded them or of the contemporary figures circulating through it. There would not be kept a single memory of those painters now, were it not for a Rousseau, a Dupré, a Corot, a Delacroix, a Millet, who suffered by them, and whose hapless story cannot be related without at least citing the names of the professional ancestors who preceded our group of giants. In his hours of freedom, the young Théodore Rousseau would forget the ill teaching of his master before the instruction derived from the external creation. It may be claimed for him that he was the pet pupil of nature, and a grateful and sensitive pupil, who began to consecrate a lifetime thenceforth to glorifying his benefactress. It was in the environs of Paris that young Rousseau would temper his soul, after the deleterious lessons that were tried to be forced on him. The illustrious Rémond lost his time when he endeavoured to convince this particular scholar that it was necessary to pass by, with calm and haughty indifference, before the splendours of creation, and contrive an Art out of counterfeit.

For Théodore Rousseau the feeling for veritable art was accompanied by a profound love of his native soil. It seemed to him that France was

sufficiently rich in picturesque sites to inspire a painter. Did not Ruysdaël derive a part of his quality from the very fact that it is the aspect of his own country which his art celebrates? Was not Hobbema an immortal landscape-painter especially because he had developed his genius by the tender study of the land where he was born? Was it not mere foolhardiness to try to construct by theory a world more fine than the actual world, to disdain the glories of our forests, the beauties of our plains, to go astray in the

vagaries of rearrangements of foliage such as was never seen but in the pictures of our forefathers? It was an inexplicable thing to the young Rousseau that these blind eyes could see nothing of the splendours which surrounded them. What, did their hearts never beat, did they not feel the intoxication of nature which stirred the blood of this stripling? Their artificial painting was without soul, without emotion; the grandeurs of their native soil escaped them; the poesy of our forests remained for them a sealed book; these men had never thrilled to the scenery of home. And they called themselves artists!

At the period of the French Restoration, the painters of England were the first to rise in revolt against the successful routine of historical land-

scape. But their works were unknown in France; it cannot then be said that they showed the road to the great French landscape artists; they arose but a short time before our own; they emerged, as ours did, from the protest of all honest hearts against the artificial. The instinct of truth and the need to strike deep into nature are innate in humanity. Separated by the Ocean and knowing nothing of each other, the English and the French marched by two different paths towards the same end. In this awakening of a sincere art in either country, France was destined to place herself at last in the first rank, and leave far behind her the English school. Among the great French landscape-painters who have not only guided the national art back again to nature, but whose influence was to be so important over the foreign schools, Théodore Rousseau occupies the highest place, because he is the most perfect master. The grand aspects of landscape and its tenderness are equally familiar to him. He renders with the same mastery the smile of creation and its terrors, the broad open plain and the mysterious forest, the limpid sunbright sky or the heaping of the clouds put to flight by storms, the terrible aspects of landscape or those replete with grace. He has understood all, rendered all with equal genius. The great contemporary painters have each a particular stamp, Corot painting the grace, Millet the hidden voice, Jules Dupré the majestic strength; Théodore Rousseau has been by turns as much a poet as Corot, as melancholy as Millet, as awful as Dupré; he is the most complete, for he embraces landscape art absolutely.

The pictures of this genius were refused obstinately at the official exhibitions by the gentlemen of the Institute. At every start of French art in the present century, we find them showing the same intolerance in their presumption, ever wishing to shape the souls of artists to their own fancy. This Institute of the date of 1830 is responsible in our annals for an unprecedented persecution. Pitilessly fanatical in the midst of its own feebleness, it sought to strike down those authentic spirits who were unwilling to be docile. Rousseau, penetrated with injustice, and disgusted to the soul, went to ask a refuge in the forest of Fontainebleau, and appealed to nature from the injustice of men. He knew that he should find there another reprobate of the Academicians, Millet, the dignified martyr. Between the two great painters there began then to strengthen those ties of friendship which nothing subsequently disturbed. Later, when Rousseau was more lucky than Millet, he bethought him of a cunning and kindly way of coming to his friend's aid. From time to time he would buy one of Millet's works, letting him believe that it had been purchased by an American. It is

thus that we still find these two, from their commencements to the very close, united by a boundless sympathy for their mutual powers, and by a pathetic brotherhood of soul. Their two names are inseparable, united in poverty and difficulty from the beginning to the end. We find Millet again, at the deathbed of Rousseau, weeping for his best friend, whose departure plunged in solitude again the great misunderstood genius of Barbizon.

Millet was never to quit the little village which he has made famous. Less misanthropic than he, Théodore Rousseau was constantly planning

a removal to Paris. Millet avoided the city, Rousseau was always returning thither, for he felt that Paris was his veritable battle-field, in which he was to conquer or die. We can mark his halting-places by the injustices he met with. When finally received in the Salon, the pictures of Rousseau were placed in such positions that it was a fresh insult added to so many others. In distributing the recompenses, this master was passed by with disdain. There were masterpieces by him already in the galleries of all the collectors, when at last, in 1852, it was decided to give him the decoration of chevalier of the Legion of honour. It was indeed time, for when the Exposition Universelle of 1855 arrived, and received from the contributions of our painter one of its principal claims to glory, it at once avenged this great artist for all his persecutions.

But however striking his vindication, it could not expel from Rousseau's mind the recollection of the coldness with which he had been treated. There remained a deep wound in his bosom from which he could not be free : we find the trace of it in the bitterness which stole over him in relation to his country. He spoke of wishing to emigrate to England, to Holland, or Germany, from all which countries he received constant testimonials of respect. Amsterdam had named him an honorary member of her Academy of Fine Arts, when France would not open to him the doors of her own. With advancing age, Rousseau was attacked with that thirst for honorable recognition which in an artist is the first sign of senility. He did not carry stoicism to the end, like Millet. Though haughty and full of contempt for his detractors, Rousseau's self-love had at length received a wide and deep wound, made up of pin-pricks. We find the signs of his bitter feelings in his correspondence, in those familiar notes which were published after his death, and which are like the cries of pain from the ulcerated heart. At this time a period of hesitation begins to be seen in the work of the great painter. We perceive that he begins to take note of the objections of his enemies; we notice those infallible indications of an invalid brain, the half-expressed tendencies of imitation visible in his works. These tardy concessions are not convincing proofs that Rousseau wished to patch up a reconciliation with his persecutors, but his will was yielding. The Salon of 1864 was the witness of this defection, a matter of pain to Rousseau's admirers.

It is proper to point out this change towards a style polished even to paltriness, at the same time that it is allowable to explain it.

The wife of the artist had become deranged, and Rousseau, notwithstanding the advice of physicians and friends, was unwilling to be separated from her; henceforth this admirable artist, who had gone through so much suffering in youth, saw his riper life darkened by the incurable malady which had fastened upon his tenderly beloved companion. We see him now begin to wander hither and thither at hazard like a soul in pain, flying from the forests to the sea without the ability to fix himself anywhere; everywhere the image of his wife follows and haunts him; between nature and the artist's eye this figure of madness perpetually places itself. The painter's hand is still on his work, but his thoughts are elsewhere. So now we have this grand type of disdain trifling with the minutiæ of the outset of art; he is irritated by nothings; nervous disease seems to be gaining on him. The old animosity had not laid down its weapons in the case of this grand and pure genius; through the renown which had slowly accu-

COROT

mulated on the name of Rousseau, his detractors pursued their warfare of intrigues and vengeance. For instance, Rousseau, though chief of the section of the Jury at the Universal Exposition of 1867, did not receive the rosette of officer of the Legion of honour, which was the object of his ambition. To him, to Dupré and to Millet, that is to say to three of the most admirable artists of the century, there were preferred, in the distribution of official recompenses, Gérôme, Pils and Français.

This time, Théodore Rousseau felt that it was enough. We can judge of the extent of the wound made in his self-esteem by this oversight, from a fragment of a letter which was found among his papers after his death; it is a draught of a protest to be addressed to the Emperor. Rousseau gave up the idea of the letter, but he had received a death-wound. Penetrated with disgust, with his brains in ebullition, his soul given over to bitterness, he went back to Barbizon, to die there.

VIII

In France art lived for a long time on an Orient of imagination, where violent colours shocked against each other in the sunshine and sputtered with a thousand disorderly fires. The actual Orient is something quite different. The transparence of the atmosphere stretches something like a tint of silver gray, of exquisite delicacy, over the landscape, it is soft and harmonious, not violent and showy. The first time I watched Stamboul from the bridge of the Bosphorus, at the setting of the sun, I was surprised at the difference between the Orient of the routine and the Orient of reality. The first is an agglomeration of violent tints where objects and people are arranged in cut-paper patterns on a flame-coloured sky; the last is a gentle, penetrating harmony. No artist has better rendered the true Orient in its distinction of colouring than Eugène Fromentin. He was not satisfied with studying Africa in the products of his predecessors. He had seen it with eyes of his own, and estimated it with his personal thoughts, as a poet with melting heart, an observer with delicate fidelity. In this delightful artist, the painter's talent was enhanced by very decided literary aptitude,

and thus in his works, he not only paints Africa, he narrates it. His *Fantasia*, for instance, is not merely a delicious picture, of an incomparable refinement of colouring, but a page of description, such as a professional writer might have given, with his most individual and exhaustive powers. In the open plain, before the Ameer and his escort, the Arabs pass at their fastest gallop, on their small horses, uttering clamorous cries and playing tricks with their long guns. Nothing can be harder to execute than such a complicated canvas, where hundreds of horsemen are crossing in a bewitched tumult. Yet the beholder's eye can embrace this passing human whirlwind at the first effort and in every detail; the bournouses float on the wind; the men are seen in violent action, standing up in their stirrups or lying along on their horses' backs; everywhere is life, but uneasiness nowhere; the transparence of the oriental sky floods the whole scene and makes it a unit in its multiplied details. This Orient does not resemble any of the African pictures which were painted before Fromentin; it is from the artist's personal accent that the charm of the work arises, and this is what gives the painter the distinguished rank which he occupies in the annals of the century.

The first time I saw a picture by Fromentin — at the Salon of 1863, I

think — I was immediately struck by the revelation of the veritable Orient which the painter had brought for us. It was the famous *Arab Falconer*, which the artist exhibited at that period. The horseman was galloping through a wide landscape, carrying a falcon which seemed about to fly. Into that simple scene Fromentin had contrived to put all the grandeur and all the poetry of African desert scenery and the Arab; the man who could express so many sensations in such a subject was evidently a poet himself, that is to say a nature sensitive and open to all the seductions of the animated creation. Criticism has often reproached Fromentin for making too many sacrifices to the literary side of his subjects, that is to say, for having dwelt too much on the anecdote expressed in his pictures.

But it is not forbidden in art, that I know of, to tell the world the peculiarities of a distant civilization and put before the public eye its veritable character with a wealth of minute details and with a grand descriptive power. The utmost that can be said of Fromentin is that he has spread here and there, over his own particular Orient, something like a varnish of Parisian elegance; this proceeded rather from the naturally perfect distinction of the man, who conferred on his Arabs the grace of his own individuality. In this delicate artist the brain was fundamentally refined,

so that whatever the eye regarded assumed in the thoughts of Fromentin a poetical cast. Every artist of worth finds it impossible to quite separate his work from his personal sensations; it is really by this that the great painter is distinguished from the artist of secondary rank; the latter is oftenest furnished merely with the painting eye without the artist spirit; he renders marvellously what he can see, without adding the thrill of the soul. Any art-work which does not let us likewise look into the privacy of its author remains in an inferior rank, whatever may be the skill of the craftsman. Eugène Fromentin is revealed from head to foot in his pictures. He was a being of rare distinction, one who ennobled, in some aspect, whatever passed through his mind. He has regarded and painted the Orient like a poet. In his Arab hordes, camping in their bivouacs or crossing the desert, he has not chosen to see the reality of things or the details of their degradation ; as the hand of the craftsman played over the canvas, the spirit of the artist was careering with a poet's flight through space. When he paints the Arab at rest with his horses browsing untethered beside the tent, he is awed by the mysterious grandeur of such a scene, in the desert silence, under the limpid sky where the stars are shining. When he paints him in action, he perceives him as a manifestation of the tameless restlessness of a wandering historical tribe, a being who has never learned to measure and restrain his movements. He always and everywhere confers upon the creature of the Orient the real grace, the distinction, of the whole race. And the thoughts of the artist are so overflowing with his subject, that frequently he finds the art of painting inefficient before the burden of all he has to express. Then he lays down the palette and seats himself at the table before his inkstand; he writes charming works about the Orient, where at every line the painter reveals himself through the man of letters, even as his pictures reveal to us without difficulty the literary man in the painter.

It has often been hinted that Fromentin, if he had not been a born painter, might have been an author of eminence. This is completely to misunderstand, in my opinion, the dual faculty of this distinguished spirit. What gives his descriptions of travel their charm and value, is not alone the literary style, attractive as it is, but the painter's warm and deep-coloured vision, added to the written part. A writer, pure and simple, would have turned out a more finished literary form ; but a painter only could, by his clairvoyance of the image to be shown and by the pictorial colour of his style, double the charm of a literary work with that of a painted one, and complete the literature with the picture.

When one had examined the pictures of Fromentin, his person could not in any way surprise one; it was just as I had preconceived the artist that I found him, when, for the first time but towards the close of his career, I paid him a visit in his studio on the rue Pigalle. He was just the correct and distinguished man represented by his peculiar form of art, the painter who had passed a great part of his life in the solitudes of Africa, and who had brought back from those long absences, devoted to contempla-

tion, the reticence of the oriental. He talked little, like the members of the race who inspired his pictures. The tribes who live in the solitude of those vast spaces absorb with age the silence which surrounds them. Their liveliness is not noisy like ours; they know by experience that they could not fill the mighty distances with their own echoes. A contemplative life makes man taciturn at the same time that it naturally gives him the need to centre in himself; among these tribes the internal sensation is more intense than ours, without betraying itself by abundance of speech or exuberance of gesture. We may establish the truth of this observation among our own peasantry, who become less excitable in proportion as the scenery of their lives becomes more majestic.

From his long journeys in the Orient, where Fromentin had passed

years in contemplation of his surroundings, the painter had brought back to France the silence of the Arab. His words were well weighed and deliberate, his gestures measured, his voice was low; he would shut himself up in the studio, where the light was admitted by one lofty window, letting the artist nurse his oriental recollections without being disturbed by the sight of the Paris throng passing his house. The quantities of studies in his workroom bore witness to the assiduity of his toil. He had observed the Arab among his surroundings, and in company with his faithful friend the horse ; no one has rendered with more felicity the Arab steed in the grace of his action. Whether resting or galloping in open space, the Eastern horses of Fromentin perfectly show their race, with their delicate ankles, their bearing so alert, their hides like a changeable silk, and their proud carriage of the little head on the broad, powerful chest. It is all perhaps a trifle more delicate than nature, a little more attractive than the stark fact ; but can an artist be blamed for giving of his own ideality, his inseparable faculty of discernment, to the work he executes ? In Fromentin, the draughtsman caught the most admirable movements ; the colourist saw the matter with his choice sense of hue ; and the poet, for his part, added some mysterious, delicious reverie to the compositions borne off from the suggestions of actuality. See the *Camp*, for instance ; you fancy you hear the melancholy songs of the Arabs mixed with the whinnyings of the horses feeding unbridled. Africa inspired the painter with enthusiasm, not only for painting ends, but he breathed its poetry and got it into his canvas, and that is just the essence of charm in the incantations of our charmer.

The Orient of Fromentin gives me an excellent opportunity to speak of the Orient of Fortuny, who was represented, he too, by several Arab scenes at the Exposition of the Hundred Masterpieces. The celebrated Spanish painter only valued the East as a pretext for his exercises of inimitable legerdemain, which no one has ever surpassed. But he looked at Africa as an instrument for him to play on, and in consequence he never saw but the surface. These works of his are masterpieces of execution, we agree, and by this execution is explained the amazement with which they were greeted on first appearing. But they are only what may be called the fugitive first impression, attached to a canvas by a painter to whom difficulties of work were but sport. To graduate the attainment of these two orientalists, I would say that they played the same morsel on the same instrument, but in two very different fashions. The Spanish wonder executed giddy variations on a melody which the French master played simply with his whole soul. We stand amazed before the prodigious ability

Daubigny fc

of Fortuny; we stand enchanted by the penetrating accents of Fromentin. The *Gate of the Alhambra*, by Fortuny, is a miracle of execution; the *Arab family on a Journey*, by Fromentin, is a master-work of sentiment.

The reader will discover, without my insisting on it further, the difference between these two styles inspired in the same scenery. With Fortuny the precision of eye is irreproachable, and the hand never has a moment of hesitation. With Fromentin we find these qualites too, but

deepened by the poet's thought, by that profound impression which Africa had left within his soul, and from whose trace his slightest work could not be free.

Still, we should run the risk of being unjust to the memory of Fortuny if we did not recollect that death had mown down his days at an early stage, whereas Fromentin arrived at the maturity of life, and was permitted to utter the last expression of which his style was capable.

If scenery holds a preponderating place in the works of Fromentin, it is because, before becoming one of the most distinguished genre-painters in French art, he commenced by devoting himself to landscape. His professor in this style was an excellent artist, M. Louis Cabat, now

director of the French Academy at Rome; it is respectful to mention him here, though his pupil resembles him in nothing. Fromentin is one of those predestinate artists who give an individual mark to their work. He has been a good deal imitated, but he imitates no predecessor, and it is indeed on that account that his grade is marked with such distinctness among the best of his time. He is, to give him his right name, one of the enchanters.

Those who estimate the value of a work of art from the scale of the figures, used often to blame Fromentin for always restricting his works to small proportions; just as if such and such a tale of Merimée's, for instance, was not worth a novel of several volumes by some one else. But even if we admit that Fromentin himself condemned as inferior his figures of grand dimensions, is it not a proof of the fine sense of an artist when he recognizes and judges his own faculty, and conforms himself to it? Nor is what is called grand art always large art. It was not the comprehension of vast dimensions which this choice spirit lacked. Fromentin wrote, about the *Masters of Yore*, a volume of studies which shows how thoroughly his mind was open to the grand works of past centuries. He was content to admire them, without attempting to imitate them.

IX

UEEN of the Fays, Destiny often reserves her richest surprises for the artist, but her last endowment, and the best of them all, is in conferring on the painter the power of keeping to the close the illusions of his youth. Charles-François Daubigny was one of these fairies'-nurselings. At sixty years, he was as young in spirit as when he dipped into the simplest elements of his art, under the guidance of his father, the distinguished miniature-painter of the French Restoration. It is to the dweller in the open air, in the perpetual strengthening contact with nature, that this freshening of the ideas arrives, flowering anew with every springtime. Daubigny was, with Rousseau and Corot, and with the still surviving Jules Dupré, a lover of those banks of the Oise, where a great part of his life flowed along; more than the others, Daubigny has made us the intimates of that delightful

region, where Rousseau only painted a few of his works, but where the whole glory of Daubigny may be said to repose. He loved them so, that he chose to live there all his life. His house at Auvers was well known. There was always a cordial welcome, but it was better to let him know of your visit beforehand, or you ran a great risk of not finding him at home. With the dawn of day he would disappear, embarking in his boat, and letting himself float away at the will of the stream ; when he met a new site, when

nature showed him an unexpected aspect, the boat was anchored in the middle of the rivulet, and in a few hours the landscape-painter had seized, as it were on the wing, the impressions of the scene. We might say that all his pictures were thus the intoxications of his instants of enthusiasm, the moments when the brain of the artist was enfevered by nature. He was a marvellous improvisatore, and his finest pictures, those to which the highest value was attached by the best judges, were thus touched off in the heat of the first impulse.

The dwellers on the banks of the Oise and the Seine knew him well. The ambulant landscape-painter was more especially designated by the title of the " Captain", a rank which vastly flattered him, for by dint of living on the water he had acquired a sailor's roughness, and a sailor's

pride in good navigation. The boat used by Daubigny was arranged for long voyages; the cooking was done on board; there was a good wine cellar; you drank deep and you worked hard. The sketches accumulated; and when winter was come, Daubigny returned to Paris provisioned with the booty of art and nature, the landscapes which, towards the close of his life, collectors and dealers battled for. How many times I have seen him thus, in his latter days, when his hair had grown white, mild and grave, good-naturedly gratified and wearied at the same time by the throng of visitors, perfectly affable, but inflexible, and dismissing an intruder with some whimsical bit of rudeness when he was attacked in his artistic pride! Little adapted for social civilities, Daubigny regretted the good old times when the dealer stole discreetly into the painter's studio and carried off his purchase at a reasonable price; but he was forced to capitulate with modern customs, and keep his studio open to the invaders one day in the week. From nine o'clock in the morning the procession began, and we may own that for Daubigny it was a veritable torture; the collectors would usually pass blindly the sketches of pictures to which the artist properly gave the greatest value; the dealer always asked for the same thing, and caused to glisten in his eyes the money-question, which after all had its importance. Upon which the haughty artist, irritated in his very marrow, cried out one day before the awe-struck visitors:

"Let me alone. The best pictures are the unsalable ones!"

This phrase deserves in my opinion a long discussion. It tells all in a few words; the artist's rebellion against fashion, which tried to force him into one eternal style, and the artist's pride which refused to recognize the public vogue as the adequate compensation of a painter. He would not deem that the appreciation of a work of art might rest on any other consideration than art-quality. What, there were then marketable pictures and pictures not marketable? Alas! yes, and the proof was that magnificent large-scale canvases remained on the artist's hands, while people struggled to get others of a more cheerful aspect which were not their equals.

All this perplexed the "Captain", who was not really happy except when in his boat, afar from man. When young, a journey to Italy was Daubigny's dream; but he came back very much confused, bringing home nothing worth while from his inspection of the picture-galleries. In the scenery of his native land, which revealed itself the more seductively to his mind because he had been long separated from it, Daubigny found instantly his proper path; this path was in the ground just under his eye, in the charm of the sun-bright streamlet, or in the mysterious beauties that

came on with the night, when nature is pencilled in its grand outlines. At twenty-three years of age, success arrived, never more to forsake him. The public was struck by the novel and perfectly individual note struck by the artist, by the tender accuracy of his colour, and by the energy of his handling. He brought to landscape painting the realistic keynote in the best sense of the term, that is to say the matching of real objects by a deeply-felt stroke, so that with each new sensation, freshly-breathed in the

presence of nature, he shifted his art; in one picture, where the painter has paused to smile at the perfect grace of a landscape, his painting is full of the lambent flatteries which accompany a beam of the sun in the springtime; in another, where the artist has found himself astounded before the grandeur of a scene, as in the admirable view of the *Château Gaillard*, he rises to the calm height of greatest art; when the landscape had struck him especially by its general planes, he flung it on the canvas in those marvellous sketches which the artist refused to carry on further because he had nothing to add to this massy statement; at other times he insinuates himself into the details as exhaustively as possible, and

refines on his work to the utmost limits of execution. In this way the career of Daubigny is based on the simple and truthful art-theory that the handling of a picture ought to reflect the mood felt; that the painter can no more work perpetually in the same style than the writer can employ an unvarying form for the play of his thought.

Yet success did not come without struggles to Daubigny. He conquered it slowly in the succession of picture-exhibitions, he had his ups and downs, he was energetically contested, and the masterpieces of this master artist seemed to some people only sketches; the public characterized as "unfinished" this free and astonishing mastery of execution, so long misunderstood. Daubigny let them talk and pursued his way steadily. Was he not the supreme master of his theory? And by what authority, save that of the endless artistic routine, can an artist be directed to continue his labour when he believes that he has carried it to the pitch desired? Why force a painter to finish his canvas more highly when he has judged it to embody his final expression? It is fundamentally stupid to class works of art as sketches and pictures; there are good things and bad things; every time that the critic tries to go further than this radical classification in judging a work by a great man he runs the risk of a mistake.

His pictures followed each other accordingly at the Salon, and for a long time he accompanied them by etchings; for Daubigny loved this branch of engraving, which in every age has been the passion of genuine artists. It was only towards 1860 that Daubigny, after twenty years of labour, arrived at his complete renown; then he took definitive rank among the greatest landscape-painters of his time.

Now that the artist felt himself in port, his ambition swelled with his success. Great subjects arose to his mind. Between the pictures called easel-pictures, he undertook works majestic in scale while simple in conception, thinking nothing of the sale. It was for himself he worked, for his own artistic satisfaction. And it was of these works begotten independently of all practical cares that the old painter cried that the best pictures are the unsalable ones. It made little difference to him. It was for his own private satisfaction and for a protest against the fashion which would have imprisoned him always between the same banks of the Oise, that he undertook the *Appletrees in blossom*, the *Field of Poppies*, and the *Grand Moon-rise*, admirable works, which still, by their size or choice of subject, were hard to get rid of. We may declare of Daubigny that, though he always put his whole art in whatever he did, the best part of his soul gushed into these grand works which were not conceived in view of speculation.

E. TROYON. 1851

Arrived at the maturity of age, admired by all the artists, solicited by collectors, overrun by the dealers, this exquisite artist remained pure and simple; here is the secret of his juvenility of workmanship, always reflecting the primitive sensation, to a degree astonishing in a man arrived among the sixties. Théodore Rousseau, weary with ill-health, made a compromise with his principle of art at the last; Corot, so long neglected, let himself be tempted, towards his seventieth year, into hasty production; Daubigny, if not the strongest at least the firmest of them all, aimed at a loftier point of sight the older he grew. He felt real regret in noticing the hasty work of Corot, whom he loved above all others, and blamed him for it with the earnestness of a mortification that was not unmixed with a shade of bitterness.

On two or three occasions when I found myself in Daubigny's company in moments of expansion, he opened his whole soul, always young, tender and affectionate. Beyond a doubt he was content with the situation he had acquired and the distance he had made. Now he dwelt on the culmination of his career; he was just ready to touch the happy moment when he could live henceforth for glory, after having assured the future of his family: he would only paint great canvases, "those which are unsaleable". In these intimate unbosomings the face of the famous painter was transformed; his heart warmed itself at the touch of his juvenile ambition, as nature renews consciousness under the spring sunshine.

It was delightful to note the renewal of youth in a man of his age. With his elbows on the table, Daubigny would rest his chin on his two open hands. He must have been handsome formerly, and even yet his head had that beauty of old age when the eye is thoughtful and tender, which is like the radiance of a fine soul. The unlucky rheumatisms which he had caught on the river, from living in damp situations, had engraved the gentle face with deep lines of pain; the disease from which he so suffered was always coming back to the charge after a moment's respite, and was bound to get the better of the resisting powers of the famous artist; he grew old in advance of his age. In the midst of pain, he did not lose sight of his art, the art which had kindled the adolescent, which had been the abiding thought of the man, whose mind was still musing on novel effort at the time when the body was already laid low. We remember the last word of Goethe, who died with the cry for "Light!" Daubigny, on his deathbed, uttered an expression which deserves to go down to posterity, for it was the representative voice of a painter going into eternity with a final thought of that which was the aim of his life. The great landscape-painter crowned his

long fine career with an admirable saying, depicting the artist better than the critic could do in undertaking to celebrate him. We are told that, at the last hour, a dying person will see instantaneously the whole life he has lived, as in a mirror of the past. The end of Daubigny seems like a confirmation of this notion. He did not deceive himself as to the approaching result; he faced it without weakness; without bravado, or rebellion, or discouragement at the eternal problem of death. Among his last spasms for breath, his thoughts sought his rivals in renown who had gone before him.

"Adieu," he said, "adieu, I am going to see up there whether friend Corot has found me any new subjects for landscape-painting."

In this final thought for his art the last sigh of Daubigny was drawn. Thus, at forty years' distance, death, which struck him down in 1878, found the artist of seventy still thinking of artistic discovery, as at the epoch of his first contribution to the Salon, which was as early as 1838. Death seemed to the great artist the great liberation; and he died with a smile, in the hope of a new life where among his famous friends he could finally realise the dream of his ambition; and paint the pictures that never should be sold.

X

ITHOGRAPHY, when introduced in France under the Restoration, set all the artists burning with a perfect passion for so novel a vehicle. The fatty body of the lithographic chalk gave startling effects on the stone; and better still, no middle-man came between the artist's inspiration and his executive in reproducing his work. It was thanks to lithography that Raffet, for example, among many others, was able to throw off, on stone, the innumerable compositions which made his name famous and his talent popular. Thanks to it again Gavarni was able to reveal himself as an unapproached master in his line. No engraver, however able he may be, can give in a copy the impulsive charm of the design executed by the artist himself. The mechanical processes by which lithography has

been killed have only half filled its place. They give you, if you will, the exact reproduction of the work, but without the artist's feeling, communicated to the stone over which his crayon played in the creative fever. Born in 1803, the young Decamps found in the lithographic process a field open to his imagination and a resource for his slender youthful purse. Like every predestinated artist, the taste for art had come to him without effort, if it was not in resisting the instruction in artistic vice which he

received, first from a humble painter, M. Bouchot, next from Abel de Pujol, who was really somebody under the Restoration, while waiting to be nobody at all under Louis-Philippe. I do not deny the usefulness of a kind of primary education in art; but, if we will but take notice that the lesson inculcated is always a paltry thing when it is not augmented by a man's individual discoveries, we need only study the lives of the grand painters to whom this work is dedicated to see that not one of their teachers can boast of having had the slightest influence over their careers.

An artist worthy of the name always feels the stir of grand passing events. Decamps felt himself inspired by the Greek struggle for indepen-

dence, which aroused the emotions of the whole world, while at the same time it evoked, in every form of the arts, the rage for the Orient.

With his meagre resources, he hurried off, his head full of antique Greece, his soul burning with ardour for the heroism of Greece in the present. His instinct as a colourist was his salvation, artistically speaking, in this perilous acquaintance, whence a man less gifted, an artist less original, might have brought back some fresh revival of the classical antique. Once in Asia Minor, the art of dreams vanished before the realities of things. Decamps saw the modern man of the East in his land of sunshine; he decided that he was but little like the fanciful Eastern who strutted through academic art, with masked-ball costumes on his back.

His first contribution to the Salon of 1831 had prodigious success. His Turkish scenes had been observed and studied at their home in the presence of the race. It was painting which resembled no one else, no previous style; it came from the artist's heart, and made a revelation. Never had painter fastened sunshine on canvas with such intensity. It was not made brilliant simply by the lively contrast of black shadow with the vivid lights, but it glowed in the warm exhalation enveloping the figures and objects. From that moment Decamps received his own rank in the group of artists of 1830, as we call them; he became the chief of a new school which dashed in his train among the enchantments of the East. What gave an additional charm to his work was the peculiar method of the painter, with its fine breadth and an energy so immense that it was proclaimed a miracle. To give greater relief to his white walls, as they basked in the sun, Decamps had a way of building them up as it were with his paints; by a technic of his own invention, he piled up his structures in impasto, allowed them to dry, scraped them down with a razor, and scumbled his walls with glazes, taking clever advantage of all accidents; it was a curious manner of working, which, while partaking of trickery, really made the walls of Decamps' paintings as solid as masonry. This peculiar manner of painting certain surfaces was much imitated, and Courbet afterwards adopted it, kneading his paint upon the canvas with a palette-knife.

The *Walls of Rome* and the *Village Street* at the exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces were specimens of this singular method of Decamps, as the *Coming out of School,* in its time, was considered the most brilliant specimen of his pictures from the Orient. The fixed predilection which made him recur unceasingly to the Bible for his subjects was shown in the *Good Samaritan,* which is a remarkable painting. Still, the attentive

student of the works of Decamps is obliged to confess that he sometimes overdoes his violent system of contrasts, showing more vigour than delicacy. This reproach, made occasionally by the critics of his own day, even among the warm praise they awarded him, was especially disagreeable to the artist. Decamps, who had one of those energetic faces which you take at first sight for a soldier's, was easily thrown off his balance. Another point which made him suffer was, that less importance was given to his historical compositions than to his Turkish subjects.

After his first success, Decamps was classed permanently as a painter

of the Orient. There is no doubt but that his powerful influence was especially marked in the Eastern groups of Diaz.

His ideas came to Decamps with great facility, and without apparent effort; they surged up in his sketches with giddy swiftness. As for the painter himself, he was contemplative. He retained a kind of dreamy mood derived from that early youth passed in the fields, and this turn for reverie changed his studies of the modern Orient into figures of biblical legend. It was painful to him, amid all his success, to be held to the style of Eastern anecdote; already he had thrown out his famous *Battle of the Cimbri,* in the midst of his manufacture of little canvases. And now he appeared unexpectedly in the Salon with his admirable charcoal-drawings derived from the history of Samson, and, a little later, with a series of

designs inspired by the New Testament. The artistic success of these veritable gems was not small; yet the public was less content; the subjects bursting with the sunshine of the East were nearer its intelligence than these austere compositions, among which we should reckon that of Samson burying himself in the ruins of the temple with the Philistines as that in which the soul of Decamps uttered its highest aspiration towards grand art.

Like all the great painters of his set, Decamps was quiet and simple. These men were seldom met in the world. The crowd only saw their results. Their personality was shut up in the privacy of their existence. They carried so far the fear of being molested in their originality by reports from without, that they lived hermetically sealed in studios unopened but to the initiated. Like Delacroix and Millet, Decamps retired afar from Paris; the solitude of the country charmed and allured him; there he had got the first scent of the art-principle, and it was his constant dream to go back to the home of his earliest youth, — perhaps because as an artist he was discontented at not receiving the grand rank of historical painter, perhaps because his mind was world-weary.

At last Decamps exiled himself away from Paris; he only appeared there on flying visits; his most intimate friends dared not introduce a stranger; he had formed the list of his forbears; nothing would induce him to enlarge it, for any candidate whatever. A part of his life was passed on horseback, all alone in the grand alleys of Fontainebleau, followed by those faithful dogs he has so admirably painted. When we pierce to the bottom of these retirements from life on the part of renowned artists, we always find the same reason, the wounding of an often exaggerated self-esteem. The place which his contemporaries had made in their consideration for our painter was not big enough for him. The spotless glory of certain of his rivals molested him. He confessed, in a sort of autobiographical screed, that one of his friends, the baron d'Ivry, had the power to draw him out often from his apathy, his disgust. It is a confession, explaining the state of his mind and the reason why he isolated himself. But does not this very bitterness plead in favour of the aspiring artist who, instead of battening in the luxury of the praises he had won, was trying to lift himself to something higher than aught he had yet done?

Destiny did not choose that this fine artist should have an old age isolated and desolate. While riding to hounds, a skittish mount belonging to Decamps became uncontrollable, and threw him so violently against a tree that the painter died three hours after the accident. French art of the

first half of our century bears inscribed the name of Decamps in its Peerage, to complete the roll of the elect of born painters — those who cause the "phalanx of 1830" to be owned as one of the finest groups of superior artists of which any epoch can boast.

XI

OUNTED in this admirable group of painters which throws such lustre on French art, are men of foremost rank in every style. Historical painters, character painters, landscape painters, imaginative painters, men of fantasy and men of mind, technists of the palette and single-hearted observers of nature, all these men form in their assemblage a kind of quintessence of the art-spirit of France. In these rapid sketches the reader has successively seen what kind of second and third-rate professors have secured in the eye of history the glory of attending to the early lispings of our heroes. The latter, without exception, formed themselves by the direct contact of nature, not till after having shaken off the influences which weighed upon their unfortunate youth. I have named one by one the subalterns charged with the primary artistic education of these painters, all destined to show the mark of genius in one kind or another. The first instructor of Troyon was named Riocreux, a feeble light, like all those pretenders who thought they could subdue to their own glimmer the great stars which were rising over French art. Like Jules Dupré, the grand animal-painter Troyon passed his first youth in a porcelain-factory; like that fine landscapist, he played the prelude to his glory with just the kind of work which contradicts grand art by its timorous industry. The superb executant of innumerable masterpieces grew pale over his dishes until the day when he divined his real mission, and took his flight.

Constant Troyon was not twenty years of age when he bade an eternal farewell to the Sèvres factory. Where should he go? Straight ahead, without any settled course; everywhere that nature revealed herself to his young intelligence, he made halt. When he felt hungry, he offered his services to the first potter whom he encountered on his route, and as soon as he had

earned a few weeks' freedom at this humble toil, he grasped again his staff and his colour-box and marched further on. Now workman and now artist, he appealed in this fashion to the modest taskwork of the china-painter for the means to await the day when he should be a real artist.

Thus we find for all these men the same kind of boyhood, disturbed by the struggle for the daily crust. With the exception of Delacroix and Corot, they were all forced to conquer from privation the right to shed the loftiest artistic glory over their native land. Troyon, for his part, only

caught at a rather late date the perception of his true pathway. There is nothing in his first manner which could make us foresee the rank he was one day to assume; his painting bore trace for many years of the painful labour of designing on porcelain, as the slave who has fought out his liberty carries the scars of the bamboo which used to plough his flesh. It needed ten years of Troyon's life to make him forget what had been taught him as a lad; it was only little by little and very slowly that the artist was able to rid himself of the influences of his teaching at Sèvres.

Success came hesitatingly and painfully. Not to speak of his early landscapes, which do not count in his achievement, the most important canvases passed unnoticed. Life was hard for the young landscape-

painter. Corot, Rousseau, Jules Dupré, Diaz and Daubigny marched in the van of the movement. Through the splendours, still disdained, of their painting, Millet would throw off a landscape, from time to time, in a note of severity and melancholy. Troyon joined in the step, as a conscript takes the road behind a squad of veteran soldiers. The first years of the painter were dogged by poverty, which saturated his spirit with a bitterness from which it never got free. Arrived later, by the evolution of his style, to

renown and wealth, Troyon preserved the gloom of these humble beginnings. In this he was at fault. Did he not share the public neglect with the first landscape-painters of the age? Had he suffered more, and more unjustly, than the chiefs of his company? And then, if I must express my full opinion, would the canvases of Troyon as a landscapist, grandly brushed as they are, have sufficed to establish his high renown? It was accident, and a journey to Holland, which revealed to Troyon his true mission, that of an animal-painter of the first rank, supported, this time, by a landscapist of very great talent, but not the equal of the masters.

With this development of the artist which promptly gave him his rank, success came to him rapidly. At a distance of two centuries Troyon

continued the traditions of the celebrated Dutch animal-painters, without imitating them. Paul Potter was to find a successor worthy of him. In his journey into Holland Troyon had studied the works of the grand master, and he took his line at once. Why had he not perceived before that the art of the animal-painter offered inexhaustible resources to his rare endowments as a colourist, while it still allowed him to remain a landscapist of lofty value?

The surprise of the public at the advent of a great animal-painter was no greater than that of the artist himself at being as universally praised as he had been neglected before. The special line to which Troyon now devoted himself was at that time forgotten; it only survived in two celebrated Belgians, Koekkoek and Verboekhoven, the pets of all Europe, but now already left among the neglected ones, if not among the victims of oblivion; the one painted little animals in landscapes frigidly brushed, the other was never tired of curling the wool of his lambkins with the tenderness of a barber entrusted with the head of a court beauty; a spit-curl art in which the childish, pitiful finish took away all the life which existed to a certain extent in the original design. Fancy the astonishment at the sight of Troyon's animals, with their large life, their broad brushwork in deep pure colours, studied with a discriminating sympathy for every race and species, and moving through landscapes of a master's creation. These were not the fashionable stuffed beasts, but living, moving herds, stretching themselves luxuriously in the sun, breathing the breezes cool with morning, or huddling close together at the approach of the storm. The great technical skill of Troyon, his matchless control of his craft, allowed him to grapple with all the effects of nature. In one of his subjects exhibited among the Hundred Masterpieces he has painted a rainbow, struck out from clouds still charged with electricity; while on the other side the burst of sunshine falls upon a grand red spotted heifer enjoying the warm rays. The *Cow at the Drinking-place,* with the *Valley of the Toucques*, or the *Ferry*, are so many masterpieces of the style, bespeaking Troyon's vivid power, his enthralling charm as a colourist.

This new line, then, began the true career of Troyon, which was to make him so illustrious. Money commenced to pour in, too, along with honour, yet without consoling the painter for the poverty and neglect of the past. Bitterness became one of his habits, and he made his years of experiment responsible for their gropings and the difficulty of his quest; his mind always dwelt on his earlier times, when he used to sit drawing on the side of the road, cursing the heartless fate which was always

calling him off from his art-dream to involve him in the struggle for daily bread. Arrived at the height of his position, the little china-painter of yesterday never could forgive the troubles of the former years; they were always coming up in his conversation, with a strongly marked resentment towards his epoch. In this, Troyon in fact showed himself simply what he was, the painter whose qualities were closed up in his art, and who outside of art had not the balanced character capable of looking at things from aloft. Personally I had not the advantage of knowing the famous

animal-painter, but I learn from the friends who lived with him that Troyon, beyond his painting, could bring no philosophy or discernment to his views of life. It was useless to try to comfort him in praising extravagantly the splendid position he had attained, he carried the conversation incessantly back to his days of penury, and he frankly advanced the idea that his contemporaries only redeemed a small part of their wrongs towards him, Troyon, in overwhelming him now with gold and honours.

Undoubtedly it would have been more dignified, and even more just, to refrain from travelling eternally over those years of effort, but so was Troyon constituted. It was his nature to dwell on a fixed idea; the recognition coming from all quarters was only his due; he could not put it to the credit of his contemporaries; he had been so long in the struggle

that he fancied success and prosperity might again leave him in the lurch; we might even discover, perhaps, at the bottom of this morbid nature, an exaggerated attribution of genius to himself; it was thus that he took measures in his lifetime for assuring his name an immortality, in establishing a prize, bearing the name of Troyon, and pledging to the successful competitor among the young animal-painters the means of working in peace for a term of years.

Over the death of Troyon there has been formed a legend pretending that he was killed by disease resulting from the poverty of his youth. There is no truth in this. The admirable painter of animals had only to blame his own exacting temperament if death mowed him down towards his sixtieth year, when all the other grand artists whose sufferings had been as sore and even greater than his own, were forgetting the first troubles with the first success. A man does not die of poverty after he has finally bidden it farewell for more than twenty years. Troyon died comparatively young because his temperament killed him by overreaching itself in everything, good as well as evil; he worked too much and tormented himself too much, he indulged himself more than was proper with the joys of life; and that is the reason he died, at an age when, with more self-balance, he might have seen before him long years of production and celebrity.

XII

VIRTUALLY belonging to the head of this volume, by reason of its marking the starting-place of modern French art, the name of Géricault is suffered to come in at the close, because one little sketch with its signature was all that could be found for the exhibition of the Hundred Masterpieces. Yet the *Hussard à cheval* was a marvel of colour and energy. Géricault's pictures are rarities, for his life was a short one, and no inconsiderable part of it was absorbed in those fine works which are locked up from the attainment of the collector in the Louvre Galleries; yet it would never do to put the word *Finis* to a set of

articles on the illustrious painters of our age without going back to the pioneer who found out their road for them. They all owe to Géricault more or less of that enthusiasm of their boyhood which was the mainspring of their success.

When we bethink ourselves of the whole history of French painting in the present century, of the point of its departure and the full plenitude of its glory, the name of Géricault occurs at once to the mind; his painting

forms an apparition as the highest expression of French art, even now at the close of the century, as it was the most important promise of its commencement. There is no difficulty in verifying the influence of Géricault over those who have arisen since; between the *Shipwreck of the Medusa* and the *Crusaders entering Jerusalem* the intellectual kinship is obvious, and Eugène Delacroix was the heir in direct line of Géricault. It was from the painting of this predecessor — who lavished on him, it is well known, his earliest encouragements, — that Delacroix imbibed his passion for that grand dramatic art which was to place him, with the aid of other qualities of his own, by the side of the master. The grandest work of the century in

sculpture, the *Departure for the Battle,* which Rude has chiselled on the Arch of Triumph, equally evokes the memory of Géricault by the impetuosity and grandeur of its conception. As for the other artists of 1830, as they are called, they all owe, without exception, a part of their success to Géricault, for it is his example which has given his young contemporaries the courage to go back to the source of the current. It was he who taught them contempt for conventional successful art, love for emotion in painting, and audacity to accomplish the intellectual revolution which was to throw a lustre over the century. I am speaking here without distinction of historical painters, character painters, landscape painters; the soul of Géricault broods over them all alike; we discover him in the boldness of Rousseau, in the energy of Jules Dupré, and even in the work of Millet. These masters arrived after the precursor do not resemble him, but all of them have dipped in the genius of their grandest comrade for the inspiration of their thoughts. He who least calls up the memory of Géricault in the external aspect of his art, still depends upon him for the directing theory of his labour. The *Wounded Cuirassier* and the *Vine-dresser* proceed from the same order of ideas, from the same wish to show in a single type the man whom life has vanquished. Géricault personifies this in the horseman we see at the Louvre, because his spirit was fed with the epic of the Empire, and because the reverses of Napoleon were for him a cruel stroke which pierced him to the heart. Millet, appearing in the reign of the citizen-king Louis-Philippe, at a time when all men's thoughts were turned towards the working-people, became the painter of the victims of labour, as Géricault was the painter of the victims of glory. All of the artists of 1830, without exception, were taught by Géricault to work in a large spirit and to keep simple.

This painter is not only the highest expression of French art in our century, he is one of the greatest artists who have ever lived. What is left to us of his talent allows us to construct the glory to which he would have attained if death had not struck him down in early youth. Géricault was twenty-one years of age when he signed the admirable picture of the *Chasseur of the Guard* which was his incarnation of military glory. What instructor could boast of having taught the young man this style of painting, so strong, so independent, so opposed to the workmanship of the time that the canvas was considered scandalous? His professor, Guérin, who in fact had repeatedly advised the young man to choose another career, veiled his face and assumed the sackcloth and ashes! What could be a greater mortification to him than to see his pupil disdaining the poor

lessons of academic routine, and depicting with all his soul that figure in which is reflected the headstrong career of youth along with enthusiasm for martial glories? This grand style leaped full-grown from an artist's brain, without having passed through the laboratory of the school. The young Géricault considered with truth that it was superfluous to waste his time among second-rank painters, those who claimed to justify themselves by the old Italian masters, though another story was told by the antique canvases at the Louvre. These examples, before which the young man would pause respectfully, proved to him that a servile art, depending on ancestor-worship, could only be counterfeit art, and that, however good it may be for a youth to study the master-works, no greater misfortune can come to him than to turn his back on his own spirit in the adulation of other peoples' ideas. The youthful grand painter went off to Italy, decided, however, not to let himself be swallowed up in the ancient masterpieces. As he went away, so he came back, his mind grown still riper from study, but in no degree turned away from his own personal art-impulse. Before leaving, he had painted the *Chasseur of the Guard;* on his return he signed the *Wounded Cuirassier,* a

work admirable for impetuosity, independence and dramatic expression, but above all a French work, owing nothing to Italy. Shortly after, Géricault exhibited the *Shipwreck of the Medusa,* that composition so admirably uniting life, movement, science and arrangement, a picture known to everybody. The young man of twenty-eight who painted that stirring drama was simply one of the greatest men of genius whose names the history of art preserves. His picture was maltreated and neglected, so that he carried it to England, and seemed about to leave his ungrateful country for ever. On the other side of the Channel the public was already prepared for the blossomings of a living art; the British landscapists contemporary with the French Restoration had given the first example. The *Shipwreck of the Medusa* made a sensation in London, and it may be said that Géricault's fame took wing first from the banks of the Thames before coming to brood in its plenitude on the shores of the Seine.

Even the death of this magnificent artist, a catastrophe caused by a fall from his horse, did not disarm his adversaries. It was only after long hesitation that the government, whose taste in art in every age has depended upon those who represent art officially, decided to acquire at the price of six thousand francs the masterpiece which remains the eternal pride of French art. Géricault entered the Louvre against the will of the State and of the Institute, because all the younger men forced him in by their enthusiasm, a fine tribute for this grand artist who died at the age of thirty-four without having known what a consecration was preparing for his name. An imposing funeral was arranged for the painter, and we may say that from his tomb Géricault wielded a greater power than in life, and was more redoubtable to the successful inferiors who had opposed him. All the young generation rallied to his memory; we may truly affirm of this admirable artist that his soul had remained erect in the death of the body; it soared now, and for all time, over the art of France, inflaming the new generations with love for the great and the beautiful. His name became the battle-cry and his relics the standard which guided the so-called generation of 1830 to their final triumph, and to the glory of one of the finest epochs of art which can be boasted by any nation.

TABLE

OF

MODERN PAINTINGS

TABLE OF MODERN PAINTINGS

COROT

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1. — *Bridge at Mantes* 1

At the edge of the bank, which is planted with tall white-barked trees, is seen a fisherman in his boat.

In the distance, in strong light, appears the old bridge at Mantes, through whose arches is seen a landscape vividly lighted up by the sun.

Height, 37 cent. — Width, 58 cent.
(2 1/2 centimètres make one inch.)

Belonging to M. Defoer.

2. — *The Fisherman's wife* 9

The wife of the fisherman is following a path by the coast, her infant in her arms.

In the distance appear the masts of vessels above the houses, and the ocean covered with mist.

Height, 23 cent. — Width, 36 cent.

Belonging to M. Ernest May.

PAGE

3. — *La Rochelle* 15

Between the two ancient towers which overlook the entrance to the port, is seen the city of La Rochelle under a blue sky with light gray clouds.

In the foreground, uncultivated land belonging to the old fortifications.

Height, 26 cent. — Width, 30 cent.

Belonging to M. Ernest May.

4. — *Nymphs and Fauns* 30

At the close of day, a dance of nymphs and fauns on the edge of a lake, under the shade of large trees.

Height, 96 cent. — Width, 1 m. 28 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

5. — *The Nymph and the Tiger* 38

This allegorical composition is represented in a landscape full of poetic serenity.

A nude maiden, half-reclining on her robes, presents the bird she has just killed to a young Bacchus mounted on a tiger. Near her lie her bow and arrows.

Height, 55 cent. — Width, 95 cent.

Belonging to M. Clapisson.

6. — *The Streamlet* 43

Little stream bordered by birch-trees on either side. Farm-buildings in the distance. In the foreground a woman kneels to cut the grass.

Height, 55 cent. — Width, 37 cent.

Belonging to M. de Saint-Albin.

7. — *Fisherman, Morning* 50

It is the hour after sunrise; the first rays begin to dissipate the vapours which cover the pond. The woody banks are still wet with fog and heavy with dew. A fisherman in his boat alone animates this calm and poetical solitude.

Height, 29 cent. — Width, 40 cent.

Belonging to M. Roudillon.

8. — *Garda Lake* 60

At the left, the Lake extends out of sight, reflecting a silvery sky at sunrise; at the right, a climbing pathway winds in the midst of trees and rocks, where two little girls are reposing.

Height, 60 cent. — Width, 90 cent.

Belonging to M. Albert Wolff.

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9. — *La Saulaie*. 62

Through the trees of the foreground are seen the stream and its opposite bank, bordered by farm-houses with red roofs.

Height, 45 cent. — Width, 37 cent.

Belonging to M. de Saint-Albin.

10. — *The Pond at Ville-d'Avray* 80

Tall flexible reeds cover a portion of the pond. At the left, the gradually-descending bank is planted with young trees which shade the brink; further on, upon the opposite side, appears a small house with green shutters which was the residence of Corot.

A countryman occupied in cutting the rushes, and two women trimming the grass animate this delightful bit of landscape.

Height, 50 cent. — Width, 80 cent.

Belonging to M. Georges Dufoy.

11. — *Morning*. 83

A large tree at the right, leaning over a pond, spreads its shadow over the bank. At the left, a fisherman in his boat separates the reeds to draw up his nets. The woods on the brink, still heavy with the morning fog, are reflected in the still water.

Height, 40 cent. — Width, 70 cent.

Belonging to M. Georges Lutz.

12. — *The Willows*. 91

A meadow regularly planted with rows of pollard willows. In the foreground, some cut timber. At the right is seen a farm-house with red roof, and in the distance, through the willows, the fields warmly lighted by a clear sky.

Height, 32 cent. — Width, 44 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

DAUBIGNY

13. — *Village on the Oise*. 19

On the shore, at the left, stretches a village brilliantly lighted by the sun. The sky, the houses, and the trees of the further bank are reflected in the water.

Height, 25 cent. — Width, 44 cent.

Belonging to M. Roudillon.

PAGE

14. — *Village on the Oise, Sunset* 33

The sun is setting, and crimsons the sky with its last rays. In the background are the dark outlines of two horses coming to drink at the stream. The foreground is in shadow.

Height, 37 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to M. Ch. Leroux.

15. — *Banks of the Oise.* 48

Beside the stream, bordered by a plot of osiers, two cows are coming to drink, guided by a peasant-girl. Some boats are fastened to the bank. In the distance is seen a valley bathed in golden light.

Height, 36 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to M. J. Roederer.

16. — *The Ferryman of the Oise.* 51

At the right, under a fine clump of poplars, the ferryman, having freighted his scow with cattle and passengers, pulls the boat across. Another scow is ready for the country-people who are coming down the bank.

In the distance are seen the shores of the Oise, bordered with trees and buildings, among which is the white outline of a church.

Height, 62 cent. — Width, 90 cent.

Belonging to prince A. de Broglie.

17. — *Portijois.* 68

Landscape on the banks of the Oise. At the right, on a hill, a cluster of buildings, among trees and farms enclosed by walls. A flock of geese comes down the bank, near two laundresses. At the left, in the distance, is seen the opposite bank of the stream bordered with fine trees. Sky spread with light clouds.

Height, 32 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to M. J. Roederer.

18. — *Château-Gaillard.* 77

Leafy trees and tall poplars shade the two banks. At the left the stream flows away towards a horizon enclosed with woody hills.

Height, 39 cent. — Width, 66 cent.

Belonging to M. Albert Wolff.

19. — *Valley of the Arques* 107

Landscape in the environs of Dieppe. In the foreground, a narrow streamlet where a woman comes to draw water. At the right, a herd of cows watched by a child.

Height, 36 cent. — Width, 67 cent.

Belonging to M. X...

DECAMPS

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20. — *Village Street in the Environs of Paris* 29

At the right, a wall brightly illuminated by the sun. At the left, buildings. In the middle of the street a countrywoman, with a bundle on her head, walking and holding a child by the hand.

Height, 32 cent. — Width, 40 cent.

Belonging to M. Ch. Leroux.

21. — *Italian Potters* 39

A man in shirt-sleeves is occupied in turning a jug; near him is a child playing with a cat. A woman and three other figures behind. Sunshine on the wall.

Height, 49 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to prince A. de Broglie.

22. — *Crossing the Bridge* 53

A band of Arabs, mounted on horses and dromedaries, is crossing a bridge, in the rays of the setting sun. The distant landscape is bathed in warm golden light, forming a background which strikingly relieves the nearer objects.

Height, 29 cent. — Width, 56 cent.

Belonging to baron Gustave de Rothschild.

23. — *Samson destroying the Philistines* 58

In the foreground Samson, armed with the ass's jawbone, fights a group of soldiers; in the middle distance, soldiers hurling their lances at him; in the background a city among lofty mountains.

Height, 83 cent. — Width, 1 m. 23 cent.

Belonging to M. F. Bischoffsheim.

24. — *Donkey-driver* 67

Through a meadow filled with cattle, runs a rivulet in which a boy bathes his feet. Behind him, an ass-colt with its mother.

Height, 13 cent. — Width, 20 cent.

Belonging to Mme Maurice Cottier.

25. — *The Walls of Rome* 69

In the foreground a bridge over a watercourse. At the left, in the middle distance, a shepherd tending his flock. At the background, a line of high walls with towers. The whole composition is in shadow, the sky alone luminous, with large brilliant clouds.

Height, 42 cent. — Width, 62 cent.

Bequeathed by M. Maurice Cottier to the Museum of the Louvre.

PAGE

26. — *The Good Samaritan*. 74

Servants are carrying the wounded man towards a stairway, while another person holds the Samaritan's horse by the bridle. Numerous figures at the windows and on the threshold of the inn. In the background, sunshine breaks over the high wall which is cut by a vaulted gallery.

Height, 95 cent. — Width, 74 cent.

Belonging to M. Gustave Viot.

DELACROIX

27. — *Christ on the Cross*. 4

The cross occupies the foreground; at the left are two persons seen at half-length, one of whom points at Christ; at the right, in the middle distance, two horsemen, each of whom holds a banner unfurled, one red and one yellow.

Height, 81 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

28. — *Tiger*. 11

He is stretched on a hillock of grass, with head thrown back, looking up into the air. Behind, a chain of mountains and a dark-blue sky.

Height, 31 cent. — Width, 50 cent.

Belonging to M. Albert Wolff.

29. — *Jesus on the Lake of Genesareth*. 28

Christ is recumbent, asleep in the middle of the boat, his head surrounded with a luminous aureole. A standing sailor tries to furl a sail which the wind carries away. Five or six others show by gestures their despair at the view of the hurricane which excites the waves.

Height, 60 cent. — Width, 72 cent.

Belonging to M. Gustave Viot.

30. — *The coast of Morocco*. 36

In the foreground a large boat with Arab sailors. High mountains in the distance, on whose summit shines a city.

Height, 80 cent. — Width, 1 mètre.

Belonging to M. Goldschmidt.

31. — *Hamlet and the Gravediggers* 37

He is standing at the brink of the grave, beside Horatio; a plumed cap pushed over one ear; both are wrapped in ample cloaks; one of the gravediggers is seated, the other holds out to Hamlet the skull of Yorick.

Height, 80 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Bequeathed by M. Maurice Cottier to the Museum of the Louvre.

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32. — *Greek Horseman.* 45

He is flying at a gallop on his sorrel horse, towards another Greek soldier seen from the back, who makes a bulwark of his dead horse, and fires towards a tower which is seen in the distance. A third soldier, dead, lies across the foreground.

Height, 70 cent. — Width, 87 cent.

Belonging to baron Gustave de Rothschild.

DIAZ

33. — *Little Marauders.* 27

Little village children are gathering hazel-nuts in a wood. While a lad collects them from branches, two girls catch them in their aprons. A beam of sunshine enlivens this beautiful composition.

Height, 26 cent. — Width, 21 cent.

Belonging to M. Ch. Leroux.

34. — *Descent of the Gipsies.* 35

A band of gipsies, men, women and children, in garments of various kinds and colours, comes down a steep path among the rocks. A row of trees with yellow autumnal foliage forms a canopy over them, pierced here and there with long pencils of light. In the foreground are two dogs playing by a pond.

Height, 61 cent. — Width, 45 cent.

Belonging to M. Gustave Viot.

35. — *The Pond.* 42

A herd of cows comes to drink at a small pond surrounded with rocks and water-plants. To the right and left, two clumps of trees; a sunny plain in the distance.

Height, 16 cent. — Width, 24 cent.

Belonging to M. Georges Lutz.

36. — *The Cattle-Field.* 44

In the middle of a wide clearing, overgrown with heather and various sorts of herbage, a little pond reflects the sky. To the right and left, vigorous young oaks whose foliage is relieved against a sky sprinkled with little clouds. At the background a fence dividing off another portion of the woods.

Dated 1869.

Height, 82 cent. — Width, 1 m. 10 cent.

Belonging to M. Boucheron.

PAGE

37. — *Lovers' Conversation*. 90

A young girl, sitting on a grassy bank, listens to a tale of love. Behind a standing couple in each other's arms. A Cupid is half-hidden in the foliage. In the foreground a lake.

Height, 30 cent. — Width, 21 cent.

Belonging to M. X...

DUPRÉ

(JULES)

38. — *Crossing the Ford*. 7

A broad but shallow stream is being crossed by a numerous herd of cattle. A donkey and a horse, driven by two peasants, close up the rear. Some of the animals, seen as white or red dots, have arrived at the further side, where fine trees are growing.

Height, 35 cent. — Width, 61 cent.

Belonging to Mme Adolphe Moreau.

39. — *Pasture at the edge of the Woods*. 20

Height, 70 cent. — Width, 1 m. 20 cent.

Belonging to M. F. Bischoffsheim.

40. — *The Rivulet*. 23

A nearly dried-up rivulet flows by a bank planted with slender trees; a peasant-woman in red petticoat comes to draw water.

The sky is spread with large red clouds, shining against the blue ether.

Height, 33 cent. — Width, 28 cent.

Belonging to Mme William Hooper.

FORTUNY

41. — *Choosing the Model*. 6

Height, 50 cent. — Width, 80 cent.

Belonging to Mr. W.-H. Stewart.

42. — *The Door of the Seraglio*. 10

Height, 36 cent. — Width, 19 cent.

Belonging to M. Albert Goupil.

PAGE

43. — *Arab Fantasia* 21

This picture represents a sort of religious festival at Morocco.

The throng draws back at the extremity of a cavern lighted by a wide arched opening. The lion which has been brought in is held in leash by four vigorous Arabs, while several wild figures, girl with scarves of various colours, execute a frantic dance, firing their guns the while.

Height, 50 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to Mr. W.-H. Stewart.

44. — *The Gate of Justice at the Alhambra* 31

Behind the basin of a fountain, sunk in the pavement of a broad court-yard, rises a monumental doorway giving access to a Moorish hall.

Two criminals, condemned to the torture of the stocks, are stretched on their backs, with their faces in the full rays of the sun, under the surveillance of a guard who squats on the pavement.

Height, 75 cent. — Width, 50 cent.

Belonging to Mr. W.-H. Stewart.

45. — *The Snake-Charmers* 32

Two Hindoos, one lying on his breast upon a carpet, the other squatting, watch the repast of a serpent placed before them. The reptile crushes in his folds a rabbit whose head is already partly swallowed. A third witness, looking at the scene with an eye of great indifference, is the sacred bird called the marabout.

Height, 60 cent. — Width, 1 m. 35 cent.

Belonging to M. Édouard André.

46. — *The Luncheon* 75

In a farmyard, whose walls are brilliantly lighted by intense sunshine, five drinkers are at table, singing and talking; two or three figures look on. At the right, in the shade, are large earthen jars, and around the table cocks and hens are pecking.

Blue, ardent sky, slightly veiled with a few clouds.

Heigth, 25 cent. — Width, 35 cent.

Belonging to Mr. W.-H. Stewart.

FROMENTIN

47. — *Arab Family on the March* 5

The head of the family walks in front. The women and children follow, loaded with various burdens.

Height, 26 cent. — Width, 35 cent.

Belonging to M. J. Beer.

PAGE

48. — *The Fantasia*. 12

Mounted Arabs gallop through an ample plain with unreined horses, brandishing their arms, uttering cries, and discharging their guns. At the left, a bank, where an Ameer, escorted by his principal chiefs, watches the game.

The sky is thinly covered with blue vapours.

Height, 1 m. 02 cent. — Width, 1 m. 43 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

49. — *A Camp*. 56

In a green valley is encamped a caravan; the horses and mules, some loaded with packs, some lying down, have been turned out to feed. At the foot of a hill crowned with a sort of fortress in ruins, are scattered numerous groups of Arabs.

Dated 1868.

Height, 46 cent. — Width, 55 cent.

Belonging to the baroness Nathaniel Rothschild.

GÉRICAULT

50. — *Mounted Trumpeter of Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard*. . . . 22

The iron-grey spotted horse is seen in profile and paces towards the left. The trumpeter, with his instrument hanging at his back, turns half round to the spectator. The light comes from the left, and vividly illuminates the soldier's back and the horse's haunches. Uniform of the period of Napoleon I.

Height, 95 cent. — Width, 72 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

ISABEY

51. — *The Marriage of Henri IV*. 46

Important composition. At the left, in the nave, is seen the royal procession defiling, composed of all the grand dignitaries of the realm: At the right, an orchestra of singers and musicians collected on a monumental staircase, on which are likewise seen a number of lords and ladies.

Dated 1848.

Height, 1 m. 70 cent. — Width, 2 m. 05 cent.

Belonging to M. Azevedo.

52. — *The Armourer*. 81

Height, 32 cent. — Width, 48 cent.

Belonging to M. Georges Lutz.

LEYS

(Baron HENRI)

PAGE

53. — *The Old Lace-maker* 117

A good old woman in Flemish costume of white and black, holds on her knees a cushion on which she weaves her lace; near by, a child and dog. The scene passes in a rich Flemish marble mansion ornamented with columns and statues.

On wood. — Height, 84 cent. — Width, 75 cent.

Belonging to the viscountess de Tredern.

MARILHAT

54. — *The Banks of the Nile* 59

The moon is rising, the horizon reddened with sunset. Buffaloes are drinking, and the Nile reflects the buildings and palm-trees.

Height, 35 cent. — Width, 58 cent.

Belonging to Mme Maurice Cottier.

MEISSONIER

55. — *Reconnaissance in the Snow* 2

Height, 39 cent. — Width, 45 cent.

Belonging to Mme Isaac Péreire.

56. — *Playing Bowls at Antibes* 14

Five or six men are playing a game of bowls along the wall of a seaside road. In the background one of them stoops to roll his ball, while the others await their turn in front. All are in shirt-sleeves. Passers-by wait to see the effect of the stroke. One player fills his pipe in the shade of the wall.

Dated 1869.

Height, 12 cent. — Width, 19 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

57. — *The Critics of Painting* 18

Height, 34 cent. — Width, 28 cent.

Belonging to the viscountess de Tredern.

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58. — *The Etcher* 26

He is sitting at his work, surrounded with the apparatus of engraving, and lighted by the tempered rays passing through the tissue-paper screen; the rest of the room is in shadow.

Height, 24 cent. — Width, 19 cent.

Belonging to M. Meissonier.

59. — *Turning Rein*. 34

Three horsemen in Louis XV costume have drawn up before an inn lighted by the fierce sun of the south. The tavern-keeper is in the midst, and hands their drink.

At some distance, a young man and a young woman are walking in the shadow of a red umbrella.

Further on, at a turn in the road, appears a chariot driven at a gallop, in a cloud of dust.

Height, 16 cent. — Width, 24 cent.

Belonging to M. F. Bischoffsheim.

60. — *Punchinello* 52

Height, 16 cent. — Width, 09 cent.

Belonging to Mme Maurice Collier.

MILLET

(J.-F.)

61. — *Burning Brush*. 3

A woman stands in the midst of a field, leaning on a pitchfork, and watching the burning of a heap of dry weeds.

Height, 38 cent. — Width, 27 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

62. — *Sheepfold at Night*. 8

Wrapped in his cloak, the shepherd, aided by his dogs, drives into the enclosure a flock which huddles at the gate.

Nothing can be simpler than the composition of this picture, and nothing more striking than the verity of its impression. All bespeaks the hour when mysterious noises begin to arrive from the distant parts of the plain, while the wan light of the moon gives every object an unnatural and puzzling shape.

Height, 45 cent. — Width, 62 cent.

Belonging to Mme William Cooper.

63. — *Woman making Lye*. 13

In a rustic room with a high chimney-piece, a country-woman pours a jug of boiling water into a broad tub. At the back a clear fire burns on the hearth, throwing a red glow on surrounding objects, and leaving the wall partly lighted, scarcely showing the household utensils on the chimney-shelf.

Height, 44 cent. — Width, 34 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

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64. — *Woman at her Spinning-Wheel*. 17

She is seated, with the distaff in her hand, her feet on the treadle; near her, a basket filled with balls of yarn. She works in a humble farm-house room; in the background, a tall dresser, through whose half-open door is seen pottery in careful order.

Height, 37 cent. — Width, 29 cent.

Belonging to the elder M. Coquelin.

65. — *The Hoer*. 42

A passage from a letter of Millet's may here be introduced, written in answer to the critics who attacked this picture on its appearance in the Salon of 1863.

"The remarks about my *Hoer* strike me as very strange, and I am obliged to you for sending them to me.

"Some assert that I am denying the charms of the country. I find something much better than charms, I find infinite splendours. I find, as well as they, the little flowers, of which Christ said: "I say unto you that "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these." I see very well the aureoles of the dandelions, and the sun which overflows with his own glory among the clouds, far away, over many lands. I see no less, in the field, the horses in their own vapour as they toil, and then, in a stony region, a man quite broken up, a man whose *ugh!* has been heard ever since morning, and who now tries to straighten himself up a moment to breathe. This drama is all wrapped in splendours. The scene is no invention of mine; long ago was found that expression of "The cry "of the earth."

Height, 80 cent. — Width, 1 mètre.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

66. — *The Gleaners* 76

Three poor women, one old and two young, pick up the fallen stalks in a field just reaped. Far off, the farmer and his men load the wagons and pile the stacks. The picture is wrapped in the penetrating limpid atmosphere.

Height, 83 cent. — Width, 1 m. 10 cent.

Belonging to M. F. Bischoffsheim.

ROUSSEAU

(THÉODORE)

67. — *Banks of the Oise*. 24

The picture, in the feeling of the finest Van Goyens, is a *tour de force* of light, delicate colouring. The stream has overflowed, and covers the country with broad sheets of water. At the left, a group of trees; near by, a fisher taking up his nets. The houses of the other bank seen in the mist.

Height, 43 cent. — Width, 63 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

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68. — *The thatched Cottage* 25

At the left, the path leading to an enclosed cottage. Also on the left, trees. A man rows his boat on a pond in front. Farm-buildings under walnut-trees; distant fields, with a church steeple.

Height, 22 cent. — Width, 29 cent.

Belonging to M. Boucheron.

69. — *The Morning* 40

The tributaries of a stream wind through different parts of the plain; the ground in front is covered with bushes and plants. Beyond the rivulet, willows and a group of trees, and woods on the horizon.

A blue sky, sprinkled with light fleecy clouds, lights the scene with a bright and harmonious glow.

Height, 42 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to the baroness Nathaniel Rothschild.

70. — *The Fisherman* 54

A fine spring morning in the environs of l'Isle-Adam, at the moment when the sun pierces through the vapours which rise from a stream. A fisherman comes home with his nets and lines.

Height, 98 cent. — Width, 1 m. 33 cent.

Belonging to M^es^ Isaac Péreire.

71. — *Evening* 62

The sun is about to set; a portion of the woods is already covered with the vapours of evening. In the foreground rises a clump of oaks with yellowish foliage brilliantly lighted by the last rays of the sun. A horseman passes along a sunken road, riding a white horse.

Height, 40 cent. — Width, 62 cent.

Belonging to the baroness Nathaniel Rothschild.

72. — *Village under the Trees* 63

Large, century-old trees overshadow a number of thatched cottages surrounded by walls. A country-woman in a blue skirt comes to draw water in a rivulet among the verdure.

Height, 71 cent. — Width, 62 cent.

Belonging to M. F. Bischoffsheim.

73. — *Edge of the woods of Monts-Girard* 64

At the side of a forest road rises a threatening old oak, as if disturbed to see before it a young grove which has dared to shoot again above the massacre of its species. The oak clasps in its powerful roots a mass of rock, which is flat like a flagstone. A blue, calm sky, with light clouds.

Height, 90 cent. — Width, 1 m. 20 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

PAGE

74. — *The Evening*. 70

The sun has sunk behind the red horizon. A sky covered with large clouds, as well as the plain, is enveloped with a warm golden light.

A fisherman standing beside a rivulet running through the plain prepares to throw his line.

Height, 43 cent. — Width, 63 cent.

Belonging to M. Defoer.

75. — *Group of Oaks in the Forest of Fontainebleau*. 78

The sun warmly lights up the entire plain. Cattle are coming to feed under the shade of the great trees.

Height, 62 cent. — Width, 1 metre.

Belonging to M. Édouard André.

76. — *Banks of a Stream*. 80

A stream of flowing water, where two fishers have thrown their lines, winds between banks covered with thickets and osiers; to the distance, as far as the foggy horizon, extends a boundless plain diversified with groves of trees amidst cultivated fields.

Scattered light clouds in a blue sky which lights this delicious landscape.

Height, 22 cent. — Width, 32 cent.

Belonging to M. Georges Dutfoy.

77. — *The Pond-side*. 85

An old oak, with lusty foliage, shades the brink and is reflected in the pond. A boy sits fishing at the foot of the tree. The opposite bank and the whole landscape are vividly lighted by the sun.

Height, 19 cent. — Width, 24 cent.

Belonging to M. Georges Lutz.

SCHEFFER

(ARY)

78. — *The King of Thule*. 56

Height, 76 cent. — Width, 52 cent.

Belonging to Mme Maurice Cottier.

TROYON

79. — *Pasture in Normandy*. . . . . Publishers' Notice.

Oxen, cows and sheep are scattered through the succulent pasture which extends further than eye can reach. A light-blue sky illuminates the fields.

A farmer on horseback, going his rounds, stops to question a peasant.

Height, 82 cent. — Width, 1 m. 05 cent.

Belonging to M. Ch. Leroux.

PAGE

80. — *The Valley of the Toucque* 16

In the foreground, a red and a white cow, both admirably executed, come to drink at a stream which divides the field into two parts. At the left, a fine bull standing. At the right, some scattered animals, and two horses which cross the field at a gallop. On the brink of the stream, a cow is lying down near a slight bridge thrown over the rivulet.

Height, 1 m. 90 cent. — Width, 2 m. 65 cent.

Belonging to M. S. Goldschmidt.

81. — *The Rainbow* 48

A storm has passed by, and in the midst of the heavy clouds which retreat towards the horizon is traced a rainbow.

Standing beside a pool, a red-and-white cow is brightly lighted up by a ray of the sun.

Height, 80 cent. — Width, 45 cent.

Belonging to M. Gustave Viot.

82. — *Oxen Ploughing*. 50

Six oxen are yoked to a plough, in pairs, bending their heads to the yoke. A young countryman guides the first pair, and makes them turn to trace another furrow. Another directs the plough.

Height, 98 cent. — Width, 1 m. 30 cent.

Belonging to M. Boucheron.

83. — *The Drinking-place* 57

The view is taken on the banks of the Seine. Six draught-horses, guided by a couple of farm-lads, advance into the stream. At the left, a graceful group of poplars rises towards a gray dappled sky of a delicate silvery tone. In the distance, on the other bank, numerous little houses are half-hidden among the trees.

Height, 40 cent. — Width, 60 cent.

Belonging to M. Tavernier.

84. — *Cows drinking*. 65

A group of five cows comes to drink at the stream. At the left, near the brink, an abandoned boat. At the right, a clump of trees over a cabin.

The sun pierces through the clouds and floods the fields with its light as far as eye can reach; the water, sparkling under its rays, faithfully images the clouds and the hides of the animals.

Height, 40 cent. — Width, 60 cent.

Belonging to the baroness Nathaniel Rothschild.

85. — *Pasturage in the Touraine, near Château-Lavallière*. 66

In the foreground, two cows, one lying down and the other standing; in the distance, at the right, a flock of sheep tended by a man; at the left, three cows grouped together.

Dated 1853.

Height, 1 mètre. — Width, 1 m. 25 cent.

Belonging to Mme Maurice Cottier.

PAGE

86. — *The Fence* 71

In the foreground three oxen, one black, one light, one red, have come to drink at a pool. A fence separates them from the adjacent field, where are seen numerous animals watched by a man on horseback. The horizon is enclosed by hills.

Height, 90 cent. — Width, 1 m. 45 cent.

Belonging to M. S. Goldschmidt.

87. — *The Drinking-place* 72

Four cows, driven by a woman, come to drink at the river. Up the stream, near the bank, is a boat with a mast. At the right, some tall trees.

The sun, though hidden by clouds, bathes the landscape in light, and the water glistens in its rays, which gild the hides of the animals. This effect of a sun breaking through storm-clouds is rendered with incomparable talent.

Height, 78 cent. — Width, 53 cent.

Belonging to M. Gustave Viot.

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BOUCHER

(FRANÇOIS)

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88. — *One of the Elements : Water* 82

Height, 1 mètre. — Width, 1 m. 10 cent.

Belonging to M. Eudoxe Marcille.

GREUZE

89. — *Young Girl*. . . . . Publishers' Notice.

Oval. — Height, 70 cent. — Width, 50 cent.

Belonging to the duke de la Trémoille.

HALS

(FRANZ)

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90. — *Young Lady seated, dressed in blue satin*. 87

Height, 50 cent. — Width, 35 cent.

Belonging to baron Gustave de Rothschild.

91. — *Leve de Trouw! (Drink to Fidelity!)* 88

Height, 1 m. 05 cent. — Width, 78 cent.

Belonging to count Édouard de Pourtalès.

HOBBEMA

92. — *A Forest*. 88

The entrance to a grand forest, full of coolness and shade, with the powerful thick foliage peculiar to the woods of the North. The little lodge of the guard is half hidden under the great trees. Sky of fine tone and filled with luminous clouds. The sun can hardly pierce the dense shade of the forest.

A few figures completing the composition were painted by Lingelbach.

Height, 92 cent. — Width, 1 m. 32 cent.

Belonging to the princess de Sagan.

METZU

93. — *The Visit*. 88

A young man, whose head has an admirable expression and whose attitude is full of distinction, enters by a door a-jar into the richly-furnished room. He advances timidly towards the lady of the house, who is occupied in washing her hands in a basin held by her maid. The scene is full of coquettish grace.

Height, 83 cent. — Width, 67 cent.

Belonging to the princess de Sagan.

FRANCESCO RAIBOLINI

(Called FRANCIA)

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94. — *Holy Family* 110

Height, 59 cent. — Width, 40 cent.

Belonging to count Édouard de Pourtalès.

REMBRANDT

95. — *The Gilder* 84

Height, 73 cent. — Width, 54 cent.

Belonging to the duke de Morny.

96. — *Head of a Man in a Felt Hat* 88

Height, 80 cent. — Width, 65 cent.

Belonging to M. Édouard André.

TENIERS

97. — *Scene in Flanders* 111

Height, 37 cent. — Width, 52 cent.

Belonging to baron d'Erlanger.

98. — *The Dinner with Ham* 88

Such is the title consecrated by tradition to this picture. The scene passes in a Flemish inn. It is a festival day, and the tavern is full. The group of peasants, sitting around the table before a savoury ham, is remarkable for the various expressions of the different guests. Further back, a fiddler plays and the younger people dance; others drink, talk or smoke.

Signed : David Teniers fec. Ao. 1648.

Height, 61 cent. — Width, 83 cent.

Belonging to the princess de Sagan.

TERBURG

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99. — *Young Woman at her Toilet*. 86

A young woman in ball-dress in sitting at the table covered with a cloth. Her dressing-maid, standing by her, is finishing the arrangement of her hair, and, at the left, a young lad brings a glass on a salver. At the back of the chamber, a square bed. In front, a dog barks to catch his mistress's attention.

Height, 80 cent. — Width, 62 cent.

Belonging to baron d'Erlanger.

VAN DE VELDE

(WILHELM)

100. — *Marine*. 87

The picture is composed of some thirty vessels, six of them three-masters, forming a flotilla in line. The weather is cloudy, but calm. A throng of small boats circulate around the ships. At the left is seen an armed gunboat running a yellow flag; it is sending up the habitual salute, to which two of the ships reply.

Height, 70 cent. — Width, 98 cent.

Belonging to the princess de Sagan.

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